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**EXECUTIVE SEMINAR  
on  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
U.S.D.A.**



**PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK**

Developed by  
**JAMES L. CREIGHTON**

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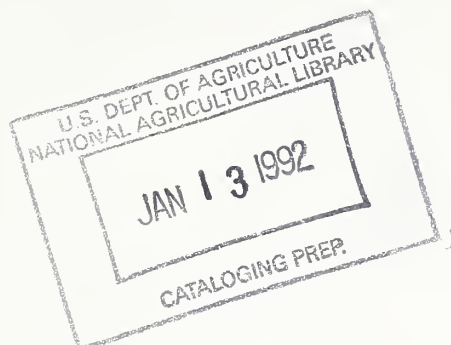


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PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK  
EXECUTIVE SEMINAR ON  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION :



SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE,  
U.S.D.A.

Prepared by:

James L. Creighton  
Public Involvement Consultant  
Saratoga, CA



## COURSE STRUCTURE



STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

WELCOME to the Soil Conservation Service Executive Seminar on Public Participation.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: The objective of this workshop is to provide Soil Conservation Service executives a common understanding of the philosophy and principles of effective community involvement, and a knowledge of the skills and techniques utilized which can be utilized in public participation programs.

CLASS HOURS: First Day - 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.  
Second Day - 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

COURSE FORMAT: This training program has been structured for the active involvement of all the class participants on the premise that people learn best when they have an opportunity to actively apply whatever they are learning. This active involvement also allows participants to share their own expertise with the other class members. As a result the course agenda contains a mix of activities including:

PRESENTATIONS: These will be short presentations on the principles and techniques of community involvement. Class members are encouraged to ask questions or discuss the topics being covered in the presentation.

CLASS ACTIVITY: These are activities involving the entire class in an exercise which will illustrate points being covered in the course.

TEAM EXERCISE: To ensure ample opportunities for interaction and involvement the class will, on occasion, be broken into smaller teams to complete assignments in which the principles taught in the course are being actively applied.

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK: The Participant's Workbook is divided into three daily sections. Each section begins with the day's agenda, and then contains all instructions, assignments, or other materials needed for the day.



READINGS: Selected readings on key public participation topics are included in this section. These articles will supplement the course work, and serve as a future reference.

These articles are primarily reprints from other training materials or manuals the Consultant has prepared for other agencies. In some cases the materials refer to that agency, or use examples which don't quite fit the Soil Conservation Service. Nevertheless the general principles apply, and there should be little difficulty in "translating" these materials to Soil Conservation Service programs.

CONSULTANT: James L. Creighton is a nationally recognized public involvement consultant whose clients include the U. S. Forest Service, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, Federal Aviation Administration, and other state and local agencies. He has also had some experience working with an SCS watershed study.





FIRST DAY



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR EXECUTIVES

### FIRST DAY

8:00- 8:30	ACTIVITY 1: Public Participation in USDA	Cutler
8:30- 9:00	ACTIVITY 2: Public Participation in SCS	Davis <sup>1</sup> Berg <sup>2</sup>
9:00- 9:30	ACTIVITY 3: Rationale for Public Participation (Presentation)	Cuthbertson
9:30-10:00	BREAK	
10:00-10:15	ACTIVITY 4: Making "Political" Decisions (Presentation)	Creighton
10:15-10:45	ACTIVITY 5: Identifying Decisions which Require "Public Accountability" (Team Exercise)	
10:45-11:00	ACTIVITY 6: Team Reports	
11:00-11:30	ACTIVITY 7: Barriers to Communication-- A Not Listening Exercise (Class Activity)	
11:30-12:00	ACTIVITY 8: Coping with Conflict (Presentation)	
12:00- 1:00	LUNCH	
1:00- 1:30	ACTIVITY 9: Understudy Opposing Points of View (Class Activity)	

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<sup>1</sup>April 3-4 Seminar

<sup>2</sup>May 14-15 Seminar



1:30- 2:30	ACTIVITY 10: Impact of the Power Role, Decision-Making Styles (Presentation/Class Activity)
2.30- 2:50	BREAK
2:50- 3:10	ACTIVITY 11: Designing Effective Meetings (Presentation)
3:10- 4:15	ACTIVITY 12: Designing Effective Meetings (Team Exercise)
4:15- 4:30	ACTIVITY 13: Team Reports



ACTIVITY 1

NOTES: Presentation on PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN USDA.  
See "SECRETARY's Memorandum No. 1955," Pg 23.

Executive Order 12812 requires F.R.

Public Law 94-408 - 1978 - 94 Stat. 1732

- S. 1 needs to work beyond 50% of the traditional community for their services, etc.
- community groups are no longer made up of people who believe in the same things and are concerned with the same things.
- It is not a simple matter to produce a community group. It is a complex matter and requires a lot of time and effort.





## ACTIVITY 2

NOTES: Presentation on PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SCS.  
See "Administrator's General Memorandum - 12," Pg. 28,  
and "The Public Participation Challenge Facing the Soil  
Conservation Service," Pg. 32.

*see Appendix PP grants to the RCPP (in the)*



NOTES: Presentation on RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

See the reading "The Rationale for Public Involvement," Pg. 35.

Also "Objectives of Public Involvement," Pg. 46.

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NOTES: Presentation on MAKING "POLITICAL" DECISIONS.  
See the reading, "Participation and Politics," Pg. 50.

- Political decision is when the impact of a decision affects different people in different ways
- When certain <sup>pp</sup> procedures are followed, the decision is legitimate + is accepted

- Rules for decision making:

1. Legitimizing the decision
2. Improving the decision
3. Arrival at a consensus
4. Don't always decide for the same constituency

- A political and technical decision is distinguished by desirability vs. possibility



*Recorder on flip chart which decisions are solely political vs which are technical*

*Group 5 Room 207*

**TEAM ASSIGNMENT: IDENTIFYING DECISIONS  
WHICH REQUIRE "PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY"**

**Purpose:**

1. To clarify the appropriate areas for public participation.
2. To distinguish between professional, <sup>(technical)</sup> and political decisions.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. The instructor will develop a list of decisions with the class for a "typical" soil conservation project. Record this list below:
2. The instructor will also assign you to a work team.
3. Select a Recorder, to keep a record of your team's decisions on a flip chart.
4. Select a spokesperson to make a report back to the entire group at the end of the assignment.
5. As a team, discuss each decision and identify which decisions you believe are solely professional decisions (pf) and which you believe are political decisions (po). You may need to break up some of these decisions and identify component parts which are either professional or political.

**Definitions:**

Professional Decisions: Factual judgements of feasibility based upon professionally-accepted criteria and standards.

Political Decisions: Questions which require choices between conflicting objectives or values; questions of desirability.

6. As a team, identify any general principles you used to assist in distinguishing professional and political decisions.
7. Assist your Spokesperson in preparing a 3 minute report to the whole class.
8. Be back in the main classroom, ready to report, at 11:45.





ACTIVITY 6

NOTES: Team Reports on DECISIONS WHICH REQUIRE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY.



CLASS ACTIVITY: BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION--  
A "NOT LISTENING" EXERCISE

Purpose:

1. To identify behaviors that block communication.
2. To identify how people feel when they are "unable to communicate."

Instructions:

1. You will be assigned either an Environmental Planning and Management Officer or Irrate Citizen role by the instructor, and paired with someone in the alternate role.
2. Read your assigned role carefully, so that you can actively play your role. Do not read your partner's role.
3. When the instructor says "start," begin to make every effort to convince your partner that you are right. Do nothing to indicate understanding or acceptance of your partner's position. GROUND RULE: No physical violence!
4. When the instructor says "stop" record:
  - a. How you felt during the activity.
  - b. The behaviors your partner exhibited which made you feel he/she was not listening.



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OFFICER ROLE:

DO NOT READ THIS ROLE UNLESS IT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO YOU.

You are the community Environmental Planning and Management Officer. You have the responsibility for maintaining current community recreation and conservation facilities and projects, and are the person responsible for planning open-land usage.

You have been pressured from all sides concerning several recently proposed developments. The ecology clubs want certain land set aside that industry needs for expansion. The several different recreational factions can't get together so they are all out for their individual causes and have sent representatives to talk to you on several occasions-- and have even phoned you at home.

You just recently tried to set up a citizen involvement program on a much-needed, long-range community open space plan and three people showed up.

The board of supervisors, through press releases and other open meeting comments, has stated that all future projects will have citizen involvement. The Board wants your full alternatives and recommendations on the open space project within five months.

To add to your problems, this is an election year and your budget is quite limited and there is a ceiling on hiring.

A citizen from your community has just walked into your office.



IRATE CITIZEN ROLE:

DO NOT READ THIS ROLE UNLESS IT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO YOU

You are a very concerned taxpayer who has recently had a letter from the city notifying you of a proposed project that will divide your 2.2 acre lot down the middle with a recreational corridor easement. Not only were you not aware of the whole future project, but you have also not been included in any stages of development as an affected landowner. The designated split of your lot will prohibit you from selling off a portion because there is a one acre minimum zoning requirement.

You have gone to three other city government offices and each has sent you on to a different office. The fourth stop is the office of the Environmental Planning and Management Officer.





## HIGH RISK MESSAGES/NOT LISTENING BEHAVIOR

## Instructions:

Below is a list of high risk messages. Read the list carefully and put a check mark by any which your partner used during the role-playing. Then go to the summary sheet below.

- ☒ 1. Ordering, Demanding: "You must...", "You have to..."
- ☐ 2. Warning. Threatening: "You had better...", "If you don't, then..."
- ☐ 3. Admonishing. Moralizing: "You should...", "It is your responsibility..."
- ☒ 4. Persuading, Arguing, Lecturing: "Do you realize...?", "Let me suggest..."
- ☐ 6. Criticizing, Disagreeing: "You are not thinking about this properly..."
- ☐ 7. Praising, Agreeing: "But you've done such a good job...", "I approve of..."
- ☐ 8. Reassuring, Sympathizing: "Don't worry...", "You'll feel better..."
- ☐ 9. Interpreting, Diagnosing: "What you need is...", "Your problem is..."
- ☐ 10. Probing, Questioning: "Why...?", "Who...?", "What...?", "When...?"
- ☐ 11. Diverting, Avoiding: "We can discuss it later..."
- ☐ 12. Kidding, Using Sarcasm: "When did you read a newspaper last...?"

## Instructions:

Summarize below anything your partner did other than verbal responses, to indicate he/she wasn't listening to you.

Examples: Looking out the window, doodling, etc.



NOTES: Presentation on COPING WITH CONFLICT.  
See reading on "Conflict Resolution Techniques, Pg. 53.



CLASS ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING  
OPPOSING POINTS OF VIEW

Purpose:

1. To identify those values that underlie significant issues about dealing with the public

Procedure:

1. Read the four different situations on the next page and select the alternative for each situation which best describes how you think you would react.
2. Select a partner to work with and share your responses with each other.
3. Working together, develop lists of values which you believe would support each of the alternatives shown in the four situations. You may wish to consult the list of values indicated below, but be sure to select only those that have significant applicability.
4. Report back to the total class at \_\_\_\_\_.

## POSSIBLE VALUES:

Quality	Public Health and Welfare	Competition
Control	Safety	Economic Growth
Efficiency	Cooperation	Democracy
Conservation	Integrity-Honesty	Equity
Preservation	Responsibility	Security
Justice	Loyalty	Compromise
Economy (Thrifty)	Competence-Expertise	Productivity
Freedom	Private Property	Free Speech
Tradition	Consent of the Governed	Individual Initiative
Free Enterprise	Growth	Creativity



SITUATION I: A government report has been leaked to the press indicating that nuclear powerplants are considerably less safe than admitted publicly by the agency preparing the report. You would:

- a. Attempt to find out who leaked the report and increase the penalties for leaking information, or
- b. Support passage of a law requiring complete disclosure of information by government agencies.

SITUATION II: A group of five professors at the local university have declared that their studies indicated that a proposed action of your agency will result in extremely negative impacts on several endangered species. You would:

- a. Phone them and attempt to set up a meeting with them to review their findings, or
- b. Start preparing your case to disprove their studies, or
- c. Ignore them, since they are likely to be "kooks."

SITUATION III: Your boss has indicated that you will be attending one of two new training programs offered to the staff of your agency, but has allowed you to select which of the two you would select. You would pick:

- a. A training program on techniques for more efficient and economical management of planning projects, or
- b. A training program on techniques for more complete identification of environmental and social impacts.

SITUATION IV: There is considerable controversy as to whether or not the impacts of a proposed plan will be to stimulate growth. To resolve this controversy you would propose to:

- a. Submit the issue on a ballot to the public, or
- b. Contract with a nationally-recognized consulting firm to study the effects of the plan.





NOTES: Presentation/Class Activity on THE IMPACT OF THE POWER ROLE, and DECISION-MAKING STYLES. See readings on "The Impact of the Power Role on the Public," Pg. 63, and "The Impact of Decision-Making Styles on the Public," Pg. 64.



Solution Try to arrive at consensus so that there is no single winner & loser

- accountability/responsibility  
usually, if you are accountable for something you are or will feel responsible as well. The trick is to involve the public (or whoever) in deciding because you still have to implement the decision in a successful manner.



NOTES: Presentation on DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS.  
See reading on "Designing Effective Meetings," Pg.67.

- determine what you want to do
  - design the format accordingly
- Minimum Requirements of a Public Meeting
- Notification Procedure
  - Transcript
  - Hearing Officer
- There shouldn't be surprise arising out of public hearings (because it comes towards the end of the process) unless there have been insufficient public involvement preceding it.
  - Nominal group process - ask each person to list all their ideas concerning the subject, list ideas on a flip chart one at a time until everyone passes. Then set priorities on each item.
  - The more autocratic the meeting, the less effective



TEAM EXERCISE: DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## Exercise: Designing Different Meeting Formats

Purpose:

1. To recognize the different types of meetings which are possible.
2. To identify meeting formats associated with different meeting functions.

Procedure:

1. Select a Recorder
2. Select a Spokesperson
3. Each team will be assigned a different kind of meeting. Your team has been assigned \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Design a meeting for the purposes assigned to your team. This design should include:
  - a. Agenda of Meeting Activities
  - b. Size of Meeting
  - c. Room Arrangements
  - d. Leadership Requirements
  - e. Equipment Requirements
  - f. Other Requirements You Identify
5. Be ready to give your report at 4:15.

- holds most creative problem solving.  
 - Problem definition  
 - Generate alternatives

- Informational meeting



ACTIVITY 13

NOTES: Team Reports on DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS.





READINGS ACCOMPANYING FIRST DAY

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM NO. 1955	23
2. ADMINISTRATOR'S GENERAL MEMORANDUM - 12	28
3. THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CHALLENGE FACING THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, by James L. Creighton	32
4. THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT by James L. Creighton	35
5. OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT by James R. Hanchey, Institute for Water Resources, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.	46
6. PARTICIPATION AND POLITICS, a Summary of a Presentation by Dr. R. W. Behan, University of Montana	50
7. CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES, by James L. Creighton	53
8. THE IMPACT OF THE POWER ROLE ON THE PUBLIC and THE IMPACTS OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES ON THE PUBLIC, by James L. Creighton	63
9. DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS, by James L. Creighton	67



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

August 25, 1978

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM NO. 1955

Improving USDA Decisions and Regulations

The growing size and complexity of government makes it imperative that we increase our efforts to ensure that the Department's actions are responsive to public needs. The President's Executive Order 12044 prescribes measures to improve the Federal Government's rules and regulations to minimize unnecessary burdens on the public while achieving maximum effectiveness. I believe the Department should apply these same principles to all decisions including regulations, agency directives, legislative proposals and reports and other program actions.

1. USDA DECISION CALENDAR

A decision calendar makes possible a more orderly decisionmaking process. It is an early warning system which permits the scheduling of the time, analysis, and public participation necessary for good decisions. It will also provide a schedule of significant regulations as directed by Executive Order 12044.

Responsibility. The General officers of the Department will determine whether actions are significant, requiring oversight or approval in the Office of the Secretary. The Director of Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget shall have overall responsibility for the decision calendar. Administrators and staff office heads are responsible for developing and maintaining a decision calendar for their agencies and offices on a current basis. The Director of Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget through the Public Participation Staff will maintain the USDA Decision Calendar and provide instructions to agencies and staff offices on the timing of reports, format and items for inclusion.

Scope and Coverage. All USDA decisions or actions which require a decision or concurrence in the Office of the Secretary are to be included on the USDA Decision Calendar. All rulemaking activities which may result in significant regulations will be so identified to meet the intent of a regulation agenda as directed in Executive Order 12044. All decisions or actions at a similar level for which other Departments or Agencies are responsible, but which require input or action by this Department, are also to be included.

Approval and Publication. The USDA Decision Calendar will be published twice each year in the Federal Register. Amendments will be published as necessary to correct or update the Calendar. The Calendar will be approved by the Secretary before publication.



## 2. SIGNIFICANT REGULATIONS AND ACTIONS

To insure adequate and effective oversight, the President has directed in Executive Order 12044 that the Secretary shall approve "significant" regulations -- those with major or extensive impact on the public. The "significant" classification in USDA will include all proposed actions that require a decision or concurrence by an assistant secretary or higher level official. This will include any regulation or action which:

will cause a substantial increase or reduction in program coverage that will affect a significant number of people

will cause a substantial change in total program outlays or in the level of direct, indirect or induced benefits or costs.

will substantially alter enforcement or compliance requirements.

will significantly expand or contract public services which might affect any stage of production, processing, distribution or consumption.

is likely to raise significant controversy due to conflict over questions of fact or impact.

When an action or regulation is designated significant, it would require approval in the Office of the Secretary before implementation or publication in the Federal Register. The agency head responsible for its development would be responsible for certifying to the Office of the Secretary that:

-- the proposed action or regulation is needed.

-- alternative approaches have been analyzed, direct and indirect.

-- impacts have been considered and the proposed action is the most acceptable.

-- public comments have been solicited and considered.

-- regulations are clearly written and understandable and compliance burdens have been minimized.

-- a contact point is listed who can competently advise the public, and

-- an adequate evaluation plan exists and will be implemented.





### 3. IMPACT ANALYSIS SYSTEM FOR RULEMAKING AND OTHER DECISIONS

All decisions should be made based on a careful, objective analysis of the consequences of the meaningful alternatives.

The Director of Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget will be responsible for the approval of impact analyses and shall develop guidelines and take action to ensure the effective operation of a comprehensive impact analysis procedure.

Agency heads, under the leadership of their Assistant Secretaries, shall develop and maintain competent analytical staff capability to perform impact analysis and institute procedures to establish the use of impact analysis as a basic decisionmaking procedure.

### 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an important device for obtaining ideas and information to better serve the public. All agencies are directed to actively solicit public comment and are encouraged to use several means to obtain the greatest possible public input.

Each agency will be required to have a Public Participation Office reporting directly to the Administrator. A coordinating Public Participation Staff is being created at the Department level. At the initiation of each rulemaking procedure, agencies will be required to have a Public Participation plan for that action. The Department level staff will review and approve the methods and effectiveness of agency procedures before they are implemented. It will also monitor agency follow-up on public suggestions and complaints that have been submitted.

Public Participation Plans should be tailored to the agencies' constituencies and should stimulate the broadest possible range of public input at each significant stage -- pre-proposal analysis, comment on proposals, comment and complaints in post rulemaking evaluation and on the needs for review of regulations.

The Departmental Public Participation Staff, reporting to the Director of Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget will issue instructions and guidelines for agency public participation offices and advise the Secretary on the performance of Public Participation in USDA. Their functions will include:

Concurrence in agency Public Participation plans.

Maintenance of the USDA Decision Calendar (and review of the supporting agency Calendars).

Regulatory complaint monitoring and follow-up.

Assurance that proper procedures are followed in developing significant regulations.





## 5. WRITING CLEARER REGULATIONS

Agency heads are primarily responsible for drafting regulations. Where appropriate, their public information officers should be involved in writing regulations to make certain the writing is clear.

Our rules and regulations are intended mainly for those who must understand them to abide by them, or to use USDA programs. We also must write for those who enforce or oversee regulations. The clearer and more straightforward our regulations are, the more likely both these groups will understand them. That, in turn, should make our programs more effective and help the public accept our mission.

The Office of Governmental and Public Affairs will be responsible for working with Department agencies to develop agency plans to write regulations clearly. GPA will report to the Secretary by Nov. 1 on the results of that effort.

## 6. DEVELOPING USDA RULES AND REGULATIONS

In Executive Order 12044, the President directed executive agencies to review and revise procedures for developing and reviewing regulations as necessary to carry out the intent of that Order.

Each agency shall review its rulemaking process and make such revisions as needed to assure the following steps are part of their procedure:

1. Advance entry on agency decision calendar.
2. Identification of significant regulations for the USDA Decision Calendar.
3. A public participation plan for developing regulations.
4. "Pre-notice" to invite public input wherever possible for developing the regulation.
5. The initiation of and plans for impact analysis.
6. A format for proposed and final decision statements to cover: the significance of the regulation, alternatives considered, response to public input and comment, 60 days for comment on proposed regulations or a statement of emergency or urgency where less time is provided and the availability of appropriate impact analysis documentation.
7. Procedures for assuring clear language in all regulations.



These procedures will be applied to all informal rulemaking in the Department except for those areas exempted in Executive Order No. 12044 which involve agency management, personnel selection and Federal Government procurement. Formal rulemaking procedures, which are covered under the Administrative Procedure Act, are also exempted because of the strict rules that already apply to the conduct of hearings and the handling of evidence and information.

The Director, Economics, Policy Analysis and Budget, in cooperation with the General Counsel, will have responsibility for reviewing the steps taken by each agency to comply with the spirit and intent of Executive Order 12044 and the report to the Secretary on their adequacy by November 1, 1978.

#### 7. REVIEW OF EXISTING REGULATIONS

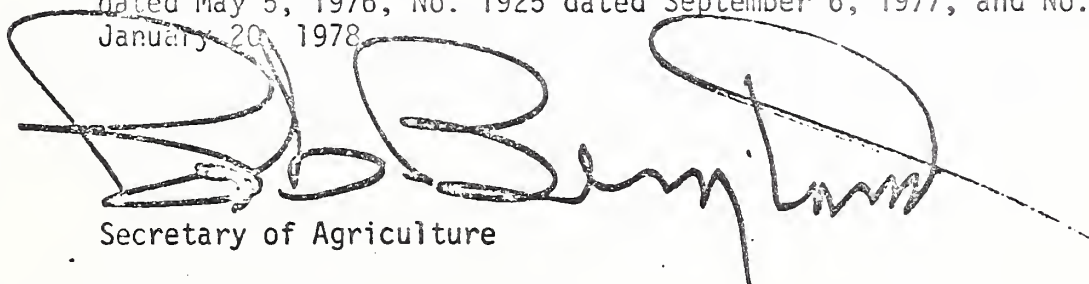
The Executive Order also directs that agencies periodically review their existing regulations using the procedural rules which apply to developing new regulations. Each USDA agency will develop plans for review to assure that no regulations have existed more than 5 years without review or repromulgation. Each should propose a portion of its regulations for review in the USDA report on Executive Order 12044 and in each subsequent Decision Calendar. After considering public comment and suggestions, a list of regulations scheduled for review would be published in the decision calendar and in notices inviting public involvement in the review.

The review process will involve two parts: (a) review for clear language, and (b) impact analysis to assess continued need and the continued appropriateness of the approach. Any revisions needed will be made following the procedures for new regulations. If no significant changes are required, a notice terminating the review and adding a "sunset" provision will be published.

#### 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

The provisions of this Memorandum are effective immediately, and will remain in effect until repealed or superseded.

This Memorandum supersedes Secretary's Memoranda No. 1865, Revised, dated May 5, 1976, No. 1925 dated September 6, 1977, and No. 1931 dated January 20, 1978.



Secretary of Agriculture



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, P.O. Box 2890

ADM-12

Washington, D. C. 20250-20013

January 12, 1978

ADMINISTRATOR'S GENERAL MEMORANDUM- 12

From: R. M. Davis, Administrator

Re: Public Participation

This memorandum states Soil Conservation Service (SCS) policy and goals for public participation in SCS activities and assistance.

BACKGROUND

SCS has long recognized that participation by the public in its programs encourages people to conserve natural resources and supports our efforts to attain national conservation objectives. Resource conservation and development planning, watershed and river basin planning, and district long-range planning all affect the public. The OMB Circular A-95 process for areawide and State review requires intergovernmental coordination. In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other legislation mandate public participation in governmental activities. Increasingly, the people of this country seek opportunities for expressing views on proposed public activities. Therefore, it is appropriate for SCS to formalize its continuing commitment to inform the public and to provide opportunities for public participation.

POLICY

It is SCS policy to inform the public of SCS-assisted resource planning and conservation activities, to provide opportunities for its participation in planning and decisionmaking related to these activities, and to take into consideration their views. This policy applies to all SCS programs, but not to technical assistance provided to an individual land owner or user. Sponsors of resource conservation and development, river basin, watershed, soil survey, or other assisted activities need to insure that this policy is taken into account. When requested, SCS personnel will assist sponsors in scheduling and providing opportunities for the public to participate. Public participation does not replace decisionmaking responsibilities of SCS, landowners, or sponsors of assisted activities.

A0







DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this memorandum, the public includes individuals who are interested in or may be affected by assisted activities, those acting for permanent or ad hoc groups, and concerned officials at all levels of government. Concerned officials are elected and appointed officials with decisionmaking or administrative responsibilities that relate to SCS programs. Assisted activities includes assistance provided under programs for which SCS has leadership.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

To insure that the public can participate in planning and decisionmaking related to its assisted activities, SCS is to:

1. Keep the public informed throughout any planning and decisionmaking process.
2. Provide opportunities for the public to contribute information, express opinions, and discuss goals and alternative proposals.
3. Evaluate information presented and make decisions that take into full account the views expressed.
4. Require conservation districts and other sponsoring groups to consider similar policies when planning and carrying out assisted activities.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Deputy Administrator for Programs is assigned leadership for involving the public in SCS programs and is to insure that (a) procedures and handbooks provide guidance for public participation, (b) training materials are available, and (c) inspection and appraisal systems check the adequacy and appropriateness of the participation.

State Conservationists (STC's) are to provide necessary guidance to Area and District Conservationists. Within policy and established guidelines, STC's are to provide procedures and insure that information materials are distributed, State and national governmental officials are kept informed, public participation activities are scheduled, and participation





-3-

activities are conducted for a broad audience. A file of participation activities is to be kept at the field office where these activities take place. This file is retained as the reviewable record, is analyzed, and its contents are taken into consideration during decisionmaking.

Area Conservationists (AC's) are responsible for guiding public participation related to SCS-assisted activities within their areas. They are to insure that resources are available and are to assist field personnel with these activities. In the absence of AC's, these responsibilities are to be carried out by the State Conservationist.

District Conservationists (DC's) are responsible for public participation in assisted activities within field office areas. DC's are to assemble reviewable records and to insure that concerned officials are kept informed.

Participation is appropriate not only for assisted activities but also in developing the district long-range program and annual plan of work--documents that guide SCS assistance to districts. SCS is to encourage conservation district officials and other sponsor groups to involve the public in planning for district affairs. STC's, AC's, and DC's are to encourage district officials to do so.

#### PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation is to be initiated early in the planning process. Initial efforts are directed toward exploring the feasibility of and support for a proposed assisted activity. Concerned officials at local, State, and national levels are to be informed early in the planning by those designated to carry out this responsibility. A variety of techniques can be used to solicit and encourage participation and to involve as many people as possible. To insure that enough opportunities are provided, it is necessary to schedule meetings, other public activities, and public hearings required by others. To the extent possible, this schedule is to specify the approximate date, place, objectives, intended audience, techniques to be used, and the assigned responsibility for carrying out the schedule. Efforts should be appropriate to the scale and/or complexity of the assisted activity.

SCS information activities are an integral part of participation activities. The public information effort begins as planning begins and continues through planning and implementation. Policy, program, and natural resource information is provided to the public in terms they understand. The schedule is to show information objectives, outline proposed contacts with editors and other news media personnel, and indicate the assigned responsibilities.



Reviewable records are to clearly show the nature and extent of public participation. These records are to include names of people and groups invited to participate, signup sheets or other records of attendance, meeting notes and highlights, issues discussed, extent of controversy, views expressed, positions taken, and decisions made. These records are also to include views expressed in personal or telephone conversations, letters, telegrams, etc. Public information and participation specialists from SCS and other public and/or private agencies may be asked to assist in carrying out these activities.



R. M. Davis  
Administrator



## THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CHALLENGE FACING THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

by James L. Creighton

In some ways the Soil Conservation Service currently has one of the most unique public participation programs of any federal agency--hundreds of daily one-on-one and small group contacts with citizens, literally out on the ground. The difficulty is that the range of publics who see themselves affected by the activities of agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service greatly expanded during the late 1960's and 1970's. It is not an unusual phenomenon to find little or no opposition to a project in the immediate area of a project, only to find strong opposition to the project in the nearest large town where people are concerned about wildlife impacts, recreation, water quality, etc.

The problem is that the on-the-ground contacts often do not reach these more urban publics. Frequently the Conservation Districts also do not serve as an effective mechanism for involving these publics, since the districts typically are composed of those who have an economic interest, e.g. agriculture, ranching, while the "new publics" typically have a use, e.g. recreation, or values, e.g. "preservation of the environment," interest.

The challenge to SCS is to reach out to these newer publics without losing the kind of personal contact which makes SCS unique. If you are talking to the full range of publics, a number of on-the-ground personal interviews can be much more effective public participation than, for example, public meetings. On the other hand, if these personal contacts are only with some of the interests--SCS' traditional constituency--then personal contacts can't do the job. The trick is to keep the best of the old, while reaching out to newer publics.

The other challenge facing SCS is that public participation programs will be substantially accomplished through conservation districts. As indicated above, one of the difficulties with this is that conservation districts are not really set up institutionally to represent all the publics, but primarily those people who have an economic interest. Districts often resent the need to reach out to other publics, such as environmental groups, whom they see as less directly affected. In fact, as they see it, environmental groups frequently want costly project modifications, but the costs are borne by the district. Yet the hard political reality is that without a broad base of support from the total range of publics, projects are increasingly difficult to get approved.





The second element in this challenge is that SCS is in a position of encouraging, possibly prodding, districts to conduct public participation programs. It is true that because SCS project funds are required, SCS has some "power" over the district, but public participation conducted under duress is rarely effective. It isn't enough to simply go through the motions of consulting with the public. It is also necessary to care what the public has to say, and attempt to design your program to be responsive to these needs and concerns. This kind of caring about what other publics feel is rarely achieved under duress.

In many ways the role of the soil conservationist dealing with a district is more like that of a Consultant, rather than a Regulator. Even though you may have some actual power, the amount of influence that you have often increases when you relate in an encouraging, consultative style, rather than in a punitive style. Like a consultant, the amount of influence that you have is largely a function of the amount of useful information you can bring to helping the other person solve their problem. New federal regulations give districts the "problem" of conducting public participation programs. If you can help them solve that problem, you will have influence, because you are needed.

One implication, of course, is that your own skills in public participation (or your knowledge of where to obtain public participation assistance) must be good enough to be of real assistance. Nothing is more frustrating to a local entity than feeling that they have to meet requirements that the federal agency neither truly understands nor has the skills to provide assistance in meeting. Because you are dealing with a variety of situations, you must also have sufficient skills to assist in designing different kinds of programs to meet different needs.

Naturally not all conservation districts will be responsive to a totally consultative approach. Some use of "power" may be necessary, such as potential withholding of project funds. However, one thing every consultant must learn about introducing innovation is to think a bit strategically. Sometimes you can attempt to force compliance and either win, but lose the future good will of all the other districts around you, or find that you don't have the clout to make it stick. Public participation is the kind of thing where people determined that it won't work can usually make that belief a self-fulfilling prophecy. As a result, you may want to concentrate your resources on working with those districts who really do want effective public participation programs, to ensure that they provide "models" of success. Several things happen with a successful model: 1) It clearly demonstrates that public participation can work, for those who have had doubts, and 2) it creates a public expectation of what effective public participation is. When enough of the district's members begin to have this expectation, they will begin to apply the pressure needed to see that an effective program is established. Naturally the "work with the people who are ready to work" strategy is only one of many, and won't solve every problem, but it does clearly indicate the need to think through the best strategy for introducing public participation in your area.





A final challenge to SCS is that of a major organizational emphasis on public participation produces considerable internal organizational change as well. For people who have been technically trained, working with the public can be an uncomfortable experience. New skills may be required within the organization. Decision-making processes may have to be more formalized, so that public participation activities can be integrated into them in a systematic manner. People with very different backgrounds and disciplines will have to work together in interdisciplinary teams.

A more detailed description of some of these organizational challenges is provided in the article CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, on Page 95.



## THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT\*

The last chapter described the mandates and requirements for public involvement. But public involvement is effective only when it is carried out with the spirit, rather than the letter of the law. This chapter will provide both the philosophical and practical arguments for why public involvement is needed, and why public involvement is in the best interests both of the agency and the public.

### What is Public Involvement?

But first, what is public involvement? Public involvement is a process, or processes, by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies and governmental entities are consulted and included in Bureau of Reclamation decision-making. Typically there are a variety of techniques which are used as part of this process, including individual interviews, workshops, advisory committees, informational brochures, surveys, public hearings, and many others.

### The Difference between Public Involvement and Public Information

Many people wonder how public involvement differs from public information or public relations programs which the Bureau has conducted for a number of years. The difference is that the purpose of public information is to inform the public, while the purpose of public involvement is both to inform the public and solicit public comment regarding the public's needs, values, and evaluations of proposed solutions. One measure of an effective public involvement program is that you will be able to identify specific ways in which the final decision is a response to public comment. If, after a public involvement program, nothing has changed, the likelihood is that this has been a public involvement program that met the letter of the law, but not the spirit of public involvement.

But obviously for the public to provide informed comment it is necessary for the public to receive information from the agency. No one can evaluate alternatives unless they have been adequately informed what the alternatives are and the consequences of each alternative. So public information is always a central element in any public involvement program. One way to diagram the relationship between public involvement and public information is to show public information as a large and significant element of public involvement (Figure 1):

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\*Reprinted from a draft version of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation's Public Involvement Manual, by James L. Creighton.



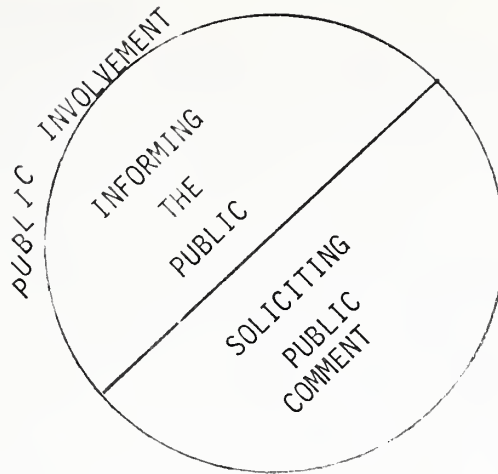


Figure 1

Since informing the public requires that the public be informed both of specific proposed decisions or actions as well as general information about water resources management, there will usually be two kinds of public information activities: 1) Public information activities designed to support a public involvement program regarding a specific decision or action, such as a planning study or proposed power rate increase, 2) Public information programs which provide continuing general information about the Bureau's activities, whether it involves continuous liason with the media, making presentations to civic groups or schools, issuing educational brochures about water conservation. Historically Public Affairs Offices with the Bureau of Reclamation have been largely oriented towards this second function, and the increased emphasis on public involvement will create demands for different kinds of services to be provided by Public Affairs Offices in support of public involvement programs conducted by the other functional areas within the Bureau. The appointment of a Public Involvement Officer for the Bureau, located with the Public Affairs Division, is evidence of the increased support that will need to be provided to make public involvement effective.

But the final measure of the effectiveness of a public involvement program is not just that the public has been informed, but that public comment has been solicited in such a manner that it has contributed to making a decision which is feasible, environmentally sound, and enjoys the support of a significant segment of the public.





## The Consent of the Governed

For the fundamental justification for public involvement is that basic axiom of democratic society that the government derives "from the consent of the governed." It is a basic premise of democracy that people have the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them.

It is in this manner that the public can hold the government accountable for its actions, and thereby both protect the rights of the citizenry and ensure the support of the citizenry for governmental actions. A government must have "legitimacy," whether that legitimacy proceeds from birth (a monarchy), from divine authority (a theocracy) or from the broad support of the people (a democracy). Without that legitimacy every action of government would be questioned and resolved only through the use of force. Every four years we "accept" the legitimacy of an elected President, even though that President may have received only a few more votes than his opponent. The process by which the decision was made--the election--bestows legitimacy on the decision itself.

Governmental agencies must also have legitimacy. No agency can survive if every action it makes is challenged or questioned. But to achieve this legitimacy, the decision-making processes followed by that agency must have a visibility and credibility which will create legitimacy. There is no way to make everyone happy all the time. But if an agency has created a decision-making process that is legitimate, people who have "lost" on a particular decision will be much more likely to say: "I don't like the decision but it was made in a fair and open manner, and I had a chance to have my say, so I guess I can live with it." The whole question of "winners" and losers" is covered in further detail on page \_\_\_, but unless people generally accept that an issue is resolved when an agency makes a decision, that agency will be unable to perform its function.

## Why the Demand for Public Involvement?

But while the justification for public involvement rests on very fundamental premises of democracy, it is true that the demand for formal programs of public involvement is relatively new, so it is worth examining the social changes and political forces which have created this demand.

## Size and Complexity of Government

When Abraham Lincoln was President the number of full time permanent civil servants in the Federal Government consisted of 60 persons. Now the number of agencies is many times more than 60, with the number of employees numbered in the millions. In fact a recent study indicated that if the number of people who are supported 100 percent by government contracts is included in the number of federal employees, the government doesn't even know how many employees it has!





Many social commentators believe that the size and complexity of government has led to people's sense of alienation from government. The "nameless, faceless bureaucrat" is often the subject of scorn and sarcastic humor. Where once an agency's local representative was known in the local community, he has been replaced by several hundred employees with widely differing background, transferring periodically around the country.

With this loss of "knowing" the government also comes a sense of loss of control. The "nameless, faceless bureaucrat" is usually seen making decisions that affect people's lives without their having any control over him. This has led to demands for participation to counteract the sense of loss of control.

### Increased Social Regulation

Since the early 1930's there has also been a steady increase in the areas regulated by governmental action. Where the philosophy of government was once "let the buyer beware" and "the government is best that governs least," there are now numerous regulations affecting safety, health, consumer protection, environmental protection, etc. etc. While there are some changes from administration to administration on the amount of regulation which is considered appropriate, government clearly plays a much larger role than it once did, and despite demands for more "free enterprise," private industry often vigorously opposes efforts at deregulation of rates, tariffs, etc.

But as the government impacts increasingly on the lives of the citizens, there are reciprocal demands from the citizens to exercise control over the government to prevent the unchecked exercise of governmental power. Many of these demands come in the form of demands for public involvement in agency decision-making.

### Technical Complexity of Governmental Decision-making

American society as a whole has become increasingly specialized, with decisions requiring extremely high degrees of technical sophistication and knowledge. The result is that politicians, or other decision-makers, have become heavily dependent on small groups of highly sophisticated technicians to recommend major courses of action. Even within agencies, studies which previously might have been conducted by one person now require an interdisciplinary team of highly trained specialists.

The result is that technicians often become a kind of priesthood with their own esoteric language, rites of membership, etc. Technicians even refer to the need to explain things in "layman's" terms--a phrase once used to distinguish people not of the priesthood.



The predictable result of creating such elites is a good deal of resentment and suspicion. Nor has the record of the technical elites dispelled this suspicion. It is now widely accepted that early urban renewal efforts often damaged the social cohesiveness of communities and produced sterile concrete wastelands in our urban areas. When observing the mounting health costs, it is hard to have confidence in the expertise of health care specialists. The "brightest and best" in the defense establishment contributed to the misperceptions and misjudgments in Vietnam. The Bureau's critics maintain that it has developed water at the expense of environmental protection, and has established policies which discourage water conservation.

Again, the result of the ensuing suspicion and resentment is a demand for more control over these technical elites, often in the form of public involvement.

#### Changes in the Basis for Assessing Projects

Within the past fifteen years there has been a fundamental change in the basis by which governmental actions are evaluated. There has been a very rapid evolution--almost a revolution--in what is "paid attention to" in evaluating governmental actions. There is a constantly expanding circle of new factors which must be taken into account. If, for example, a new water project were proposed, there was a time when the only factors paid attention to were its technical feasibility and economic feasibility. (Figure 2).

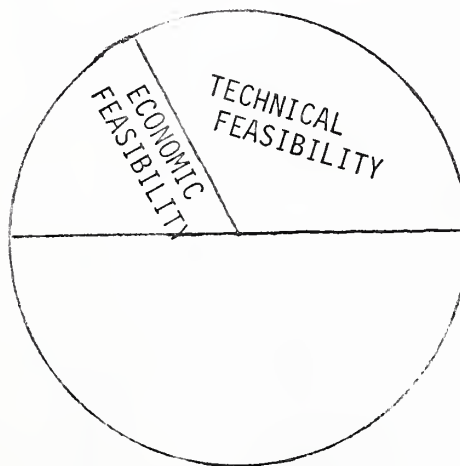


Figure 2



As more has been learned about irrigation and water use, increasing attention had to be paid to the health and safety of discharges, return flows, etc. (Figure 3)

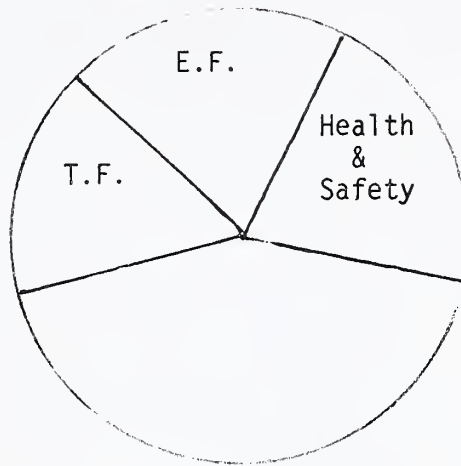


Figure 3

This was followed by a need to pay attention to the effect of water quality upon fish and wildlife. (Figure 4).

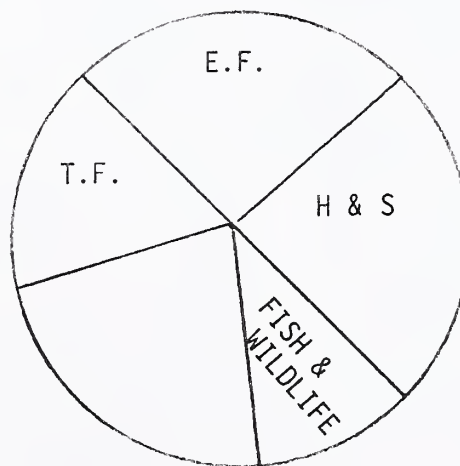


Figure 4



Coupled with concerns for fish and wildlife is a concern for the entire ecological system, with important implications regarding the possibility that humankind is reaching upper limits on resource use, with increasing needs to evaluate efficiency of water use and potentials for water conservation. (Figure 5).

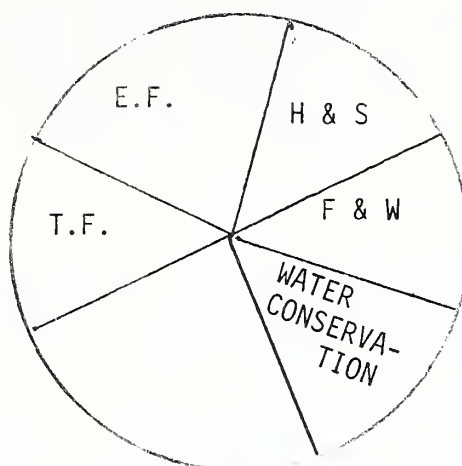


Figure 5

Most recently, under the Principles and Standards of the U. S. Water Resources Council, agencies are required to assess the Social Impacts of their actions. (Figure 6)

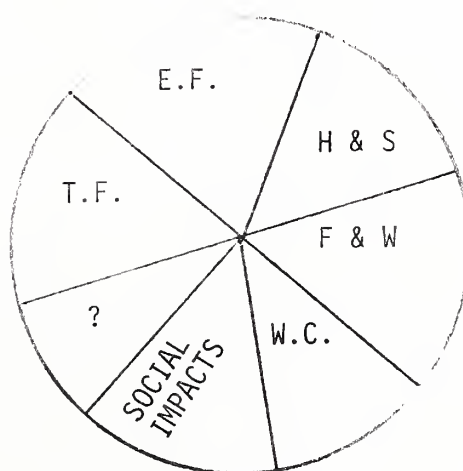


Figure 6





There is no guarantee that the expansion of this circle of factors which must be considered has yet ended. But not only has the number of factors to be considered increased dramatically, each of these factors is associated with agencies and interest groups which serve as advocates for these specific concerns. Local and state health departments and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency are all significant actors in evaluating the health and safety of water supplies. State and Federal fish and wildlife departments, sportsmen groups, and environmental groups are all advocates for the protection of fish and wildlife. There are a number of agencies and groups expressing concerns about water conservation practices and irrigation efficiencies. The adequacy of social impact assessment is evaluated by various governmental agencies, and concerns about the social impacts of projects are voiced by numerous public groups.

Rather than being faced with a single monolithic public, the decision maker is faced with a multitude of publics including agencies, groups and individuals. Each has its own concern and interest to advocate and protect, often regardless of the concerns of the other interests.

One way of describing what has happened, is to say that up until the 1960's there was a kind of consensus that if an action was technically feasible and economically justifiable, then the government was acting on behalf of all the publics by taking the action. This consensus could be portrayed as a kind of bell-shaped curve (Figure 7), with the vast majority of citizens in "the great middle." By operating within this consensus, agencies were seen as acting legitimately and appropriately.

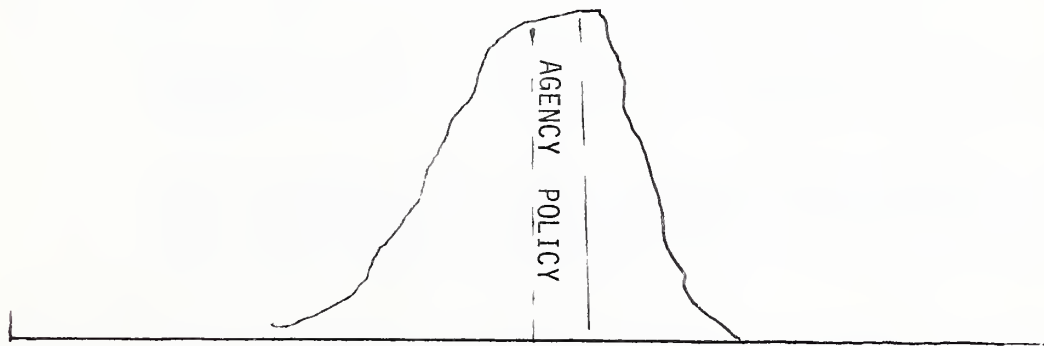


Figure 7



By the mid 1960's, however, it was clear that this consensus was breaking down. Instead groups advocated a wide range of actions based on widely different--often conflicting--premises. This change is shown in Figure 8.

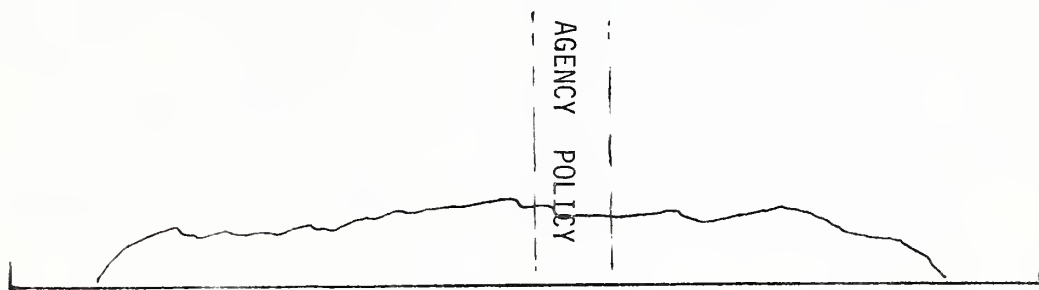


Figure 8

This change had several important implications for agencies:

1. No single point of view necessarily represented a clear-cut majority
2. Agencies which continued with the policies which had guided them through the 1950's were no longer seen as acting on behalf of everyone's benefit, but were now seen as benefitting only certain limited interests.

This dilemma can be seen clearly in the Bureau of Reclamation's own program. During the first half of the century the Bureau's primary task was water development, and people's primary complaint was that they needed still more. In effect the Bureau had a clientele of water users, but this clientele was perceived in common with the public interest at large. This feeling that there was a Bureau clientele was certainly reinforced by the "re-payment" provisions of reclamation law. It was reasonable to assume that the people paying for the project were the affected public.



But as the basis upon which projects are evaluated changed, with various groups advocating fundamentally different philosophies, the Bureau's position in relationship to the broader public interest changed. To the degree that the bureau continued to represent its water development clientele, the Bureau was perceived by the other publics not as a neutral party but as an advocate for particular interests. To the extent that the Bureau was seen as defending limited interests, it lost some of its legitimacy and credibility as an agency. This in turn resulted in demands by the various groups for increased participation in Bureau decision-making.

### Goals of Public Involvement

This phenomenon was by no means unique to the Bureau of Reclamation. Many agencies which had formerly considered themselves to be "the good guys" found themselves being questioned, challenged, criticized. The loss of governmental legitimacy and the shifts in social values by which governmental actions are measured have affected all aspects of government, at all levels. All government agencies are confronted with the problem of restoring credibility to decision-making processes, incorporating widely differing points of view in the decision-making process, and building a new consensus for its actions.

These three needs are the primary goals of public involvement:

1. Credibility - By creating an open and visible decision-making process to which everyone has equal access, public involvement provides a means of making the decision-making process credible to groups with highly divergent viewpoints.
2. Identifying Public Concerns and Values - Because the various groups have fundamentally different points of view, they will evaluate any proposed action from very different perspectives. Public involvement provides a mechanism by which agencies can understand the problems, issues, and possible solutions from the perspectives of the various interests.
3. Developing a Consensus - One implication of the highly divergent public viewpoints is that there is no single philosophy on which there is a consensus which can guide all agency actions. Rather consensus must be formed on an issue-by-issue basis. Public involvement provides a process by which such a consensus can evolve around specific agency actions.



To the extent that Bureau of Reclamation public involvement activities attain these goals they not only provide a base of support and legitimacy to a Bureau program based on the public's desires, they also serve a broader social purpose in a democracy of assisting in developing a new social consensus which takes into account the concerns of all the presently conflicting groups.





## OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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Despite the increased attention given to public participation in planning by federal natural resources agencies, it has often been difficult to develop programs or measure their effectiveness in the absence of a clear definition of what is expected by involving the public.

Often the reasons given for a public role in planning are so general as to be little guidance to the planner. In particular the planner must clearly know the objectives for public participation for a particular project in order to determine which of a wide variety of techniques are appropriate for that project. Once the objectives are defined, the other variables influencing selection of techniques -- the particular "publics" concerned, the relevant information requirements, the overall planning situation, time, resources, skills available -- can be determined and a public participation program developed which relates to that objective.

There are three major objectives for public participation, which are in turn broken down into second-order objectives which serve to clarify and to provide workable concepts for both the design and evaluation of such programs.

1. The Public Relations Objective: In order for the planning agency to develop plans which have broad public support and acceptance, the public must view the agency's role in the planning process as legitimate, and must have trust and confidence in the agency and its planning procedures.

- A. Legitimizing the Agency's Role in the Planning Process.

Agencies operate under limited authorities and this often leads to disparity between the capability of the agency to satisfy the public's needs and the expectations of the public. This disparity can result in a loss of legitimacy for the agency unless the constraints under which it operates are fully understood by the public. One of the initial tasks of a planning study is to inform the public about the agencies' authorities, responsibilities, operating procedures, and constraints. But the agency will still not have legitimacy if the public does not accept these limitations as legitimate. In such a case the agency must be prepared to modify the procedures and constraints over which it has control, and to urge and support changes in their authority and responsibility which require action by others.



## B. Development of Confidence and Trust.

An individual's willingness to accept a conclusion offered by someone else depends on two things: 1) The extent to which the other person is perceived as a source of valid information (confidence); 2) the degree to which the other person is seen as having an honest intent to share all the known valid information (trust). In the absence of this confidence and trust, communication between an agency and the public can break down badly. To maintain public confidence and trust an agency must be willing to develop information on all aspects of a planning problem, be willing to share all information even though some of it may be damaging to programs or solutions which the agency favors, and maintain sufficient objectivity to avoid appearing to favor certain alternatives early in the study.

It is not sufficient that the agency actually possess expertise and objectivity; the public must be convinced of this as well. On the other hand when an agency attempts to create this "image" through public participation without being genuine, large segments of the public will sense this lack of genuineness and will oppose alternatives favored by the agency that in and of themselves may be sound. The image must match the reality.

II. Information Objective: This objective is to determine the problems to be solved and identify the solutions which are acceptable to the public.

### A. Diagnosis of Community Problems and Needs

Often the planner sees himself, because of his professional training, to be uniquely qualified to identify community needs. Studies indicate that many planners view the public as lacking in technical know-how unaware of many issues involved in planning, lacking in objectivity, and extremely parochial. The public often views the planner as a narrow specialist with no appreciation for social values. Public participation provides the planner with the opportunity to test his perceptions of the needs by comparing them with information from the public prior to beginning the search for possible solutions.

### B. Development of Alternative Solutions

The advantages of involving the public in the development of alternative solutions are three-fold: 1) the planner can identify the range of socially and politically feasible alternatives before becoming committed to a particular outcome; 2) the public may be a source of viable alternatives if they are allowed the opportunity to present these alternatives at an appropriate stage in the planning process; 3) in the process of developing alternatives the public also develops a commitment to change, and are less resistant to new proposals.



### C. Evaluation of the Implications of Solutions:

One of the major purposes of involving the public in planning is to produce plans which are generally consistent with the values of the various publics. In order to do this the planner must develop alternative solutions embodying quite different values so that the public can get a feel for the implications of different values. The planner plays a major role in identifying the implications of the alternatives but the publics because of their familiarity with their individual problems may also play a role in forecasting consequences.

III. Conflict Resolution Objective: Conflicts between publics participating in a planning study are bound to occur due to differences in interests, values, opinions, beliefs, or scarcity of some resource. But whether this conflict occurs in a cooperative or a competitive context will be strongly influenced by the processes of conflict resolution employed by the planner.

#### A. Consensus Seeking

Consensus seeking can be described as cooperative problem-solving in which the conflicting parties have the joint interest of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. The advantages of a cooperative process of problem-solving are:

- 1) It aids open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants.
- 2) It encourages the recognition of the legitimacy of the other party's interests and of the necessity for searching for a solution which is responsive to the needs of each side.
- 3) It leads to a trusting, friendly atmosphere which increases sensitivity to similarities and common interests, while minimizing the significance of differences.

The factors which influence whether the conflict-resolution process will be a cooperative or a competitive process include:

- 1) Openness and a sharing of authority and information on the part of the planner lead to a cooperative or a competitive process. Tactics such as coercion, threat, and deception lead to a competitive orientation.
- 2) Prior successful experience at cooperative relationships will enhance the possibility of present cooperative.
- 3) The agency can be a major influence in limiting the controversy and guiding the conflicting parties toward a mutually acceptable solution by adopting the position of an impartial arbiter and by providing the opportunities for interaction between the groups.





## B. Avoidance of Extreme Positions:

A competitive process is particularly likely to occur when issues are perceived to have only two positions, for or against, win or lose. A competitive process also stimulates the view that the solution of the conflict can only be of the type that is imposed by one side or the other by superior force, deception, or cleverness. Enhancing one's own power then becomes more significant than resolving the conflict.

The competitive process is most likely to occur when there is a misjudgment or misperception on the part of one or more parties to the conflict. The planner can minimize the likelihood of miscommunication or misperception by maintaining reasonably full communication between opposing interests and by searching out and making use of common values and common interests which could serve as a basis for the formation of cooperative bonds.

A competitive atmosphere is also created if one side perceives the other as inflexible in its position. The planner should therefore avoid presenting issues to the public in a manner such that the agency's position is perceived as too rigid. This is likely to occur when only one plan is presented to the public for consideration. The public is left with very little choice but to be "for" or "against" the plan. Referring to agency constraints also makes the agency appear inflexible, but it is helpful if the planner has acquainted the public with these constraints early in the planning process.

In designing a public participation program a planner should be guided by two principles: 1) the objectives of involving the public in the study should be clearly spelled out, and 2) the techniques used should be designed to meet these objectives.





## PARTICIPATION AND POLITICS

NOTE: This paper is a summary of a presentation made by Dr. R. W. Behan, University of Montana, to a Tri-Forest Conference of the U. S. Forest Service on April 27, 1972. It is presented not because we agree with all arguments but because it raises fundamental issues involving Citizen Participation.

Many managers in government agencies want to avoid politics. Politics is a dirty word! Yet in fact those agencies which are now designing Citizen Participation Programs are doing so precisely because they are up to their ears in politics already.

Politics can be sorted out into two kinds:

- 1 ) Party Politics is primarily concerned with who occupies the seats of power and the related activities. This is the kind of politics most managers shy away from.
- 2 ) Policy Politics is more concerned with what happens rather than who. Elected officials can only handle so much - most government agencies are now heavily involved in shaping policy politics.

Historically our system of government tried to maintain a check and balance system so that there was a sharp distinction between policy-making and policy-administration. But history has moved us from "passive minimal" government to "active maximal" government. The results of this shift include:

- 1 ) A need for professional and technical skills to handle a vast array of complex problems.
- 2 ) Large, complex and highly structured administrative organizations to accommodate the technical programs and administrations.
- 3 ) Congressional delegation of large areas of policy-making to the executive agencies.

Not only do agencies directly influence policy but they interpret policy. The interpretation of legislation unalterably affects that legislation. One definition of a policy decision is when it grants benefits or imposes costs. Many interpretations do just that.

The administrator today in a professionalized bureaucracy deals inescapably with policy-politics. He is in fact a para-politician and the need is to help him be a good one.



There are really two kinds of decisions an administrator makes:

- 1 ) Professional Decisions relate to technical matters that concern "how to get things done". They depend on "factual propositions" which can be validated by the outside world and are also regulated by professional codes, associations and peers.
- 2 ) Policy Decisions grant benefits and impose costs. There is a fairly reliable test of a policy decision: If a controversy erupts (or threatens to) there are values to be acquired and costs to be borne. The controversy will decide who does what to whom. Policy decisions depend on value propositions and are pre-eminently political decisions. Administrators are held professionally accountable for professional decisions, but they are not held politically accountable for political decisions, so it is only "fair" to share these decisions with a politically participating public.

Most administrators are suspicious of politics so they try to transform a political or policy decision into a professional, technical decision. This tactic assures that the political decision will be poorly made.

Actually most decisions have components of both Professional and Policy Decisions; the task is to isolate them and behave appropriately for each part of the decision.

No one really knows where the "public interest" lies. Politicians are paid to assess the public interest, and if they guess wrong, too often they fail to get reelected.

The politician may choose whether to "mirror" the interests of his electorate or whether to "lead" on a particular issue by presenting strong views of his own. The trick is to know which is appropriate at which times. But the politician's role is still one that the bureaucratic professional could well imitate: The inspired engineering of joint, mutual or collective public policy decisions. This is exactly the purpose of a Citizen Participation Program.

There is a tendency to define "Public Interest" as the long range public benefit as opposed to "Public Opinion" which is a momentary consensus of the public or vocal segments of the public. This has several effects: It gives the agency the mandate to overrule opinion in favor of long range interests which the agency alone has the professional expertise to see.

But in fact there may be no such thing as a monolithic Public Interest: Public Interest is probably an aggregate, a source of minorities. No single interest represents the public interest or public opinion - but collectively these interests represent and express both.



If we accept a monolithic definition we have to accept a godhead view; we must automatically commit to finding the public interest and serving it. The difficulty is that even if the public interest exists, nobody knows what it is. This results in the absurdity of the one-time, factual and optimizing decision. This appeals to the professional but it doesn't square with reality.

The merry, non-rational, intuitive, value-laden, emotion-riddled, unpredictable, non-factual world will not go away. Bureaucratic professionals simply have to respond to the public as it is, not as they hope it would be.

We may have to give up the Holy Grail of a single Public Interest and accept that pragmatically it is whatever a sum of minorities equal to a majority can agree upon. This raises the whole question of the "Silent Majority." But if you observe group interaction you will probably observe that the Silent Majority accepts the decisions of the active minority through acquiescence, apathy or ignorance. Thus the noises of the Active Minority very likely represent the national interests in the issues at hand and are accepted by the Silent Majority.

For a given issue the consensus is the majority of the vocal. When bureaucratic professionals attempt to speak for "the public" or "the Silent Majority" they are probably speaking for a conceptual phantom.

Because he possesses technical information the bureaucratic professional -- the para-politician -- is more likely than the legislator to consistently "lead" rather than "mirror." A three-way communication between the pros, cons and the professional bureaucrat is a definition of good para-politics

The professional can and should serve up the alternatives; he can and should predict the biological and social consequences of each, and then his professional competence ends, for that is the end or the limit of the actual realm. At this point he must go with the consensus.





## CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

One major objective of public involvement is to arrive at a consensus on a most desirable plan so that there is a broad base of public support for the future actions of the agency. Sometimes this consensus occurs quite spontaneously as the result of the various public-involvement activities. Other times there are basic conflicts which do not appear resolvable and no consensus is achieved. In this mini-workshop we will look at those principles of public involvement design which encourage consensus formation and describe the procedures that might be used when conflict does occur.

### THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY

The role which the agency assumes in relationship to the public is one of the major determinants of whether or not a consensus can be achieved. Many agencies have adopted an adversary relationship to the public in which the public is viewed as "a troublemaker" which simply impedes the progress of the agency. Most frequently this occurs when the agency sees itself as having a "client" and sees opponents of a particular project as blocking the agency's role in fulfillment of this client relationship. The most typical ways the agency communicates the adversary role to the public are by beginning the study already committed to a particular outcome or by consulting with the public only after the agency has become committed to a particular outcome. Whenever an agency sees the public as the adversary it is likely to create a self-fulfilling prophecy: Any public treated as an adversary will soon act as an adversary, even though that adversary role might otherwise not have been inevitable.

Another basic determination that an agency must make is whether it views itself primarily as "the decision maker" or as the "facilitator" of a decision-making process. In the first conception the agency makes the decision with various individuals and interests appealing to the agency to consider and support their cause. In the extreme this places the public in the position of supplicants to the all-powerful agency. The alternative conception is that it is the agency's role to create a decision-making process which will result in a consensus on an implementable plan which, so long as it is acceptable to the public as well as technically and economically feasible, will be accepted and recommended by the agency as its decision. In effect the agency retains the legal responsibility to see that a decision is made, but operates on the assumption that the best possible definition of "the public good" is achieved through open problem solving and negotiation among the various interests.

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In this latter conception the agency can certainly participate as an equal in pointing out technical problems, impacts, benefits, or costs; but the agency does not present itself as an advocate for particular alternatives or values.

When the agency sees its role as the decision maker and the public is placed in the role of supplicant, then negotiation between the various publics becomes extremely difficult. Each group will attempt to manipulate or contrive to win over the agency in much the same way that two children may engage in elaborate strategies in an effort to win the parents' approval. If, instead, the agency believes its responsibility is to create a decision-making process, this creates a much more conducive climate for problem solving as the public can meet its needs by open and visible problem solving rather than through manipulation and power games.

#### THE PUBLIC'S STAKE IN PARTICIPATING

Even when there have been serious and honest attempts at public involvement there have been significant interest groups that have avoided the public involvement and have attempted to "win" through the judicial or political process. This raises the important question: Can a group meet its needs best through participating in public involvement or through appealing to a higher authority at a later date? When groups do circumvent public involvement programs and go instead to higher judicial or political authority, they reduce public involvement to simply a set of legal procedures to be fought over in a courtroom. Public involvement is reduced to a legal requirement which is carried out not because any resolution is expected to result from it, but because it could be a point of litigation subsequently. Some of the remedy for this ailment will have to come from the courts themselves when they recognize (as they have recently in several court decisions) that genuine efforts have been made on the part of the agency to include groups that have not always acted in good faith. If, under these conditions, the courts force the litigants back into the public participation process rather than the legal process, then the courts will assist in making it in the interest of all the groups to participate openly and visibly rather than in a manipulative manner. The other major protection against groups choosing not to participate and then attempting to win through a subsequent appeal to higher authority, is to have broad-based and enthusiastic public support and interest in the public participation activities. Given the present political climate all groups are dependent on support from other interests to have any political clout. If a group continually appears to be unreasonable or "way-out" then they will begin to lose their support with the other groups and become increasingly isolated politically. If there is local public enthusiasm for the



public participation process, then groups that choose not to participate will appear undemocratic and "elitist" to other groups and threaten their base of political support. Nevertheless, the precondition for expecting all groups to participate openly and enthusiastically in public participation is the provision of public participation programs in which their needs can be met. If there is no way that an interest can get its needs met through public participation they will inevitably go outside the public participation process in an effort to win their point.

#### WIN/LOSE vs ALL/WIN DECISION MAKING:

There is a tendency to approach any decision making on the assumption that there will be winners and losers as there are in elections, games, etc. There is an old axiom of negotiation, however, that whenever one party to a conflict believes they have lost, the negotiations have been unsuccessful. Inherent in anyone's loss are the seeds for the next battle. When the emphasis in decision making is on winning or losing, the public participation process is likely to degenerate into a situation in which each group exercises veto power on the other groups but there is no ability to mount a positive program on anyone's behalf. Instead the agency must create from the beginning an atmosphere which encourages the notion that through the public participation process everybody can win. The climate must be created in which everybody believes that the agency is attempting to develop plans which incorporate everybody's needs rather than choose sides. This ALL/WIN atmosphere must pervade through the entire public participation process if a consensus is to be achieved.

#### TRUST:

Another major precondition for effective problem solving and consensus formation is a climate of trust. Such a climate is of course difficult to achieve between the agency and publics where there are genuine differences of interest and historical antagonisms. Nevertheless there is considerable evidence that in the course of public participation programs substantially higher levels of trust can be built as a result of the agency and groups working together.

One of the major issues in establishing trust is reducing the surprises; so that no one feels "taken" or "had" by the position of one of the other groups. Two important ways of building trust are:

1. Early identification of the issues so that no one is startled by a major new issue as the process approaches completion.





2. Establishing visibility for each group's objectives:  
In many cases groups have stereotypes about the objectives of other groups which are misleading and cause inappropriate reactions and mistrust. One major component in an effective public involvement program is to create visibility for each group's objectives so that their actions are not misunderstood or their positions inaccurately perceived.

One important consideration in designing public involvement activities is to design activities which allow for sufficient interaction so that individuals representing different interests come to know each other as human beings rather than just as stereotyped representatives of a particular point of view. One agency has developed a practice of taking representatives of the conflicting interests on a two-day camping trip in the study area for on-sight inspection. This agency has found that (in addition to the information acquired about the site) relationships are built between the participants by sharing in the physical experience of camping out which breaks down many of the misconceptions and barriers to further communication between the interests. While such a technique is not suitable in all public participation programs, the agency should be aware to design activities that encourage the establishment of relationships at a human level between the agency staff and between the various interest groups.

#### SHARED DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM:

One of the first rules of mutual problem solving is that before it is possible for people to agree to a mutual solution they must agree to a mutual definition of the problem. While this may sound simple, in fact, a characteristic of most public dialogue is that different interests have radically different definitions of the problem. One person may define the problem as "getting the most economical flood control"; another may define the problem as "protecting the natural system of the river" while still another may define the problem as "planning regulations that allow people to build homes in the flood plain." With these widely divergent definitions of the problem it becomes virtually impossible to get the groups to agree to a specific plan because the plan is likely to be responding to an entirely different problem than that perceived by other individuals and groups. One process for creating a shared definition of the problem is the process of objective setting. In the process of agreeing on objectives for a project, you are in effect also agreeing on the definition of the project. One important point would be to see whether everybody agrees to all the objectives



or in fact each group is simply agreeing with the objective that is written for their particular concern and really does not buy into the other objectives as being legitimate.

#### OPEN COMMUNICATION:

Another key element in creating a climate in which a consensus is possible is open communication. Unless both the staff and the public feel that all information is open and shared and people can talk about those things that concern them most, it will be impossible to establish the kind of relationship where a consensus will be possible. At times this runs counter to the bureaucratic tendency to "keep the lid on" or to consider any public participation a failure when there is a high level of controversy. The critical measure of success in public participation is not that it eliminated controversy, but that it created a process by which whatever controversies that existed could be genuinely resolved. Efforts to "keep the lid on" have a tendency to solve the problem of suppressing noisy confrontations at the cost of failing to resolve the genuine issues that exist.

#### PARTICIPATION IN CONSENSUS FORMULATION:

The act of negotiating one's way to a consensus is by its nature highly interactive, thus any conflict resolution must usually be done with a small number of participants in a situation which allows for maximum interaction and discussion. Negotiation is not possible in front of a large public meeting. In a large meeting leaders of various interests must be seen by their constituencies as defending their interests. As a result, positions taken during meetings are likely to be more fixed and more polarized than those that would take place in private discussion. In effect negotiations must take place in the atmosphere of private discussion between a few limited individuals. However, when the number of people that participate in negotiations is substantially restricted then there can be charges of "elitism." There is also the substantial possibility that while the participants have agreed to a plan, other interests and groups that did not participate will disown the plan based on the failure to include them in the decision making. Therefore there is always a balance to be made between the need to limit the number of people involved in any consensus formulation stage with the need to ensure that all critical parties are present so that when a consensus is reached there will be a commitment of political support for it. Even if a relatively large number of individuals must participate for a consensus to be acceptable it will still be necessary to limit the number of participants in any particular meeting unless some form of large group/small group format is used. As a result it





may be necessary to hold a series of negotiating meetings although this entails certain risks of arriving at apparent agreement at one meeting only to have it unacceptable to the next, thus creating a need to return to the first group, etc.

#### BASIC STRATEGY OF CONSENSUS FORMATION

There are four basic steps that appear in most processes of negotiation whether in political parties, labor and management, etc. These are:

1. Establish areas of agreement: The first step is to eliminate from the field of negotiation any issues on which all parties are already agreed. For example, the agency might ask: "Do we all agree that some form of flood protection is needed?" This serves both to ensure that we have a shared definition of the problem and to eliminate any time wasted arguing issues that everybody has already agreed upon. In addition -- and most important -- by working together to establish areas of agreement some trust has been built and a success pattern established between the participants.
2. Clearly define the areas of continuing disagreement: In many cases the disagreements that people have are not clearly defined and there are misunderstandings as to what the positions of the other groups really are. Once some communication has already been built on things to which everybody can agree, then it is often possible to get a much more precise definition of the areas of disagreement. While this may appear to sharpen the conflict in fact people are working together in this process. People may continue to disagree with the content, but the relationship they have established is one of cooperation which will ultimately pay off in a better problem-solving climate.
3. If possible, agree on a procedure for resolving any continuing disagreements. Even when people have chosen to disagree and cannot resolve the disagreement directly, they may be able to agree to a methodology or process by which it can be resolved. Again, even if they still continue to disagree, they are also working together in an effort to resolve that disagreement and this establishes a suitable climate in which agreements can be made.
4. Continue to work on each issue, one-at-a time. Rather than try to resolve the remaining issues all at once, the usual pattern of negotiation is to work on each remaining disagreement one-at-a time.



This four-step process can, and has, served as the basis for workshops in conflict situations and has proven to be effective. This procedure can work either of two ways:

1. The most frequent outcome is that rather quickly some broad areas of agreement are established leaving relatively small areas of disagreement. Having achieved such a substantial amount of agreement there is then a willingness on the part of all parties to try to find means of resolving those few differences that do remain. In addition since there is such a substantial agreement established that -- even if some differences are not resolved -- people tend to have enough sense of commitment to the area of general agreement that they will support the plan even though they do not get all that they wish out of it.
2. In those situations where there is a substantial degree of conflict then the reverse process may take place. By working successfully on some small issues and achieving an agreement on them while postponing the large issues temporarily, it may be possible to establish a climate of sufficient trust that it then becomes possible to work on the large issues. This is the classic methodology of difficult management/labor negotiations.

#### FIVE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

Another procedure which can be helpful in solving problems is the Five-Step Problem-Solving Process shown below. These five steps are a systematic means of approaching problems whether in management or in relationship with the public. An outline summary of the Five-Step Problem-Solving Process is shown below:

##### Five Steps in Mutual Problem-Solving:

1. Define and gain acceptance of the problem.
2. Develop alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate alternative solutions.
4. Agree on mutual solution.
5. Establish a mutually acceptable plan for implementation.



### Initiating Problem-Solving:

- a. Tell all involved that you are attempting to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution and be certain they understand the procedure you wish to follow.
- b. Problem-solve the agenda. If the agenda is not set up mutually, it may be difficult to achieve mutuality on the bigger problems.
- c. Allow plenty of time to work through to a mutually acceptable solution -- a time-pressured solution usually means time wasted.
- d. Be certain that the time, location and manner of setting up the meeting communicate mutuality.
- e. Include in the problem-solving only those people involved in the conflict. Conversely, include everyone involved in the conflict.
- f. When there are very strong feelings about a problem you may need two meetings: one to get feelings out in the open and the other to do problem-solving.

### BREAKDOWN OF FIVE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING:

#### Step I Define and Gain Acceptance of the Problem:

- a. Send your feeling rather than evaluating or blaming.
- b. Use Active Listening to be certain you will get to a deeper problem if there is one.
- c. Avoid pre-conceptions as to solution -- with good communication, the whole nature of the problem may change. Besides problem-solving is not a subtle form of manipulation for influencing others to arrive at your solution.

#### Step II Develop Alternative Solutions:

- a. Again, be certain that everybody realizes that you are searching for a solution acceptable to all.
- b. Encourage others to offer solutions. If you are the Agency representative your solutions may be considered of more importance than anyone else's unless they are included among a number of other proposed solutions.





- c. Keep evaluation out at this stage. You want to create a psychologically "safe" climate.

### Step III Evaluate Alternative Solutions:

- a. Encourage everyone to evaluate solutions in terms of how it affects them personally.
- b. Use lots of Active Listening (especially when feelings crop up) to get at true feelings about proposed solutions.
- c. Use Active Listening to find out which part of proposed solution is acceptable.
- d. Don't get side-tracked with tangential problems. Put them on the agenda to be solved at another time.

### Step IV Agree on Mutual Solution:

- a. Be sure solution is truly acceptable to all. No one must be pressured into buying unacceptable solutions.
- b. Try to reach consensus agreement -- avoid voting.
- c. Re-state the solution and "test for consensus" when there seems to be agreement.
- d. Steps to take when agreement is difficult to reach:
  - 1. Keep on talking it out.
  - 2. State what portions of the solution are acceptable to all and what parts are still hanging the group up. Stress areas of agreement, pinpointing remaining areas of disagreement.
  - 3. Ask: "Are there any hidden agendas which are keeping us from reaching agreement?"
  - 4. Re-state the premise of Mutual Problem-Solving -- nobody is going to have his way at the expense of others, so we must find a solution acceptable to all.
  - 5. Get more data to break deadlock and propose new alternatives.
  - 6. Set up another problem-solving session in the future.
  - 7. Review the definition of the problem to be sure there is mutual acceptance and that it defines the problem in the most basic terms.





Step V Establish a Mutually Acceptable Plan for Implementation:

- a. Be sure that decisions in implementation are also arrived at mutually. The effect of making decisions mutually may be lost if implementation decisions are made unilaterally.
- b. If the implementation must be made by one person, at least give everyone involved in the decision a chance to give that person his/her ideas on implementation.
- c. You may find it effective to have someone summarize any agreements and distribute them for comments or initialing. This will insure that there is common understanding or will give a chance to identify areas of misunderstanding.
- d. Communicate the attitude of trust that everyone will stick to the agreement if it has been agreed upon mutually.
- e. Keep your part of the bargain.



## THE IMPACT OF THE POWER ROLE ON THE PUBLIC

There are two kinds of Power:

- 1) Administrative Power -- the power of someone in a position to actually reward or punish, and
- 2) Psychological Power -- you "invest" the other person with power and significance not based on actual ability to reward or punish (e.g., minister, celebrity).

In Citizen Participation the representative of the government agency is usually perceived to have an exaggerated amount of both Administrative and Psychological Power.

The Agency Representative is first of all seen as having the ability to make a wide range of decisions -- many of them which might contradict laws or regulations. Because of this authority which is perceived there is often a compensatory reaction when the public discovers your limited power -- "Well, if you can't make the decision, take me to THE man."

But even when there is clearly little or no decision-making power there is still a great deal of public reaction to "official" people based on Psychological Power. This is a status in which you are perceived as having all sorts of wisdom, access to information, insight. A good example of this sort of power is the credence given to Nobel Prize Laureates in all sorts of fields unrelated to their personal accomplishment. Once people have granted you this status they then may spend a great deal of effort getting you "back down to size" by being super-critical or antagonistic. Having granted you extraordinary powers it takes an extraordinary effort to get you back to normal.

The important point is that people react not to the power you actually have but to the power they perceive you to have. You may be acting within a very realistic (and thus probably modest) view of your power and yet have people reacting to you in an exaggerated manner.

People tend to find some way to equalize large discrepancies in power. They may do this by becoming very friendly, by demonstrating exceptional performance or skills, by becoming critical or antagonistic, by withdrawing emotionally or physically, by organizing in opposition, by affiliating with another power source. To complicate things, since people are reacting to perceived power it is possible for both sides to see themselves in the less powerful role and therefore both feel justified in engaging in "equalizing" behavior. You may see an interest group as having "the power" and be reacting to it at the same time it sees you as having the power and is reacting to you.

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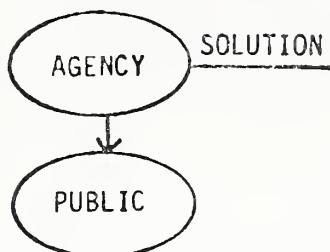
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## THE IMPACT OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES ON THE PUBLIC

A major factor in how an agency is perceived by the public is the decision-making style which is characteristic of the agency. One way of characterizing the alternative styles of decision-making is shown below:

### METHOD I:

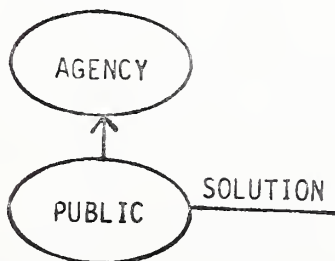


In Method I the agency is in the position of figuring out what is good for the public, communicating it to the public, selling it to the public, and in some cases, proceeding with the plan in the face of significant opposition from segments of the public:

The major effect of a Method I Decision is to establish a win/lose climate -- an adversary relationship -- between the agency and significant publics, as well as between the agency's supporters and other publics. The result is usually a climate of mistrust, competitiveness, and vilification of the intentions of the opposing sides. Often this results in increased rigidity in the positions taken by the different publics, as well as a desire to play "power games" by going to the courts or gaining the support of national political figures. Even though the agency may have tried hard to balance all the publics' needs, it is still deciding for the public, it is still in a "paternal" role.

When your Boss gives you a command you may find that there are times that although you don't really disagree with the actual command you still may feel resentful at the manner in which he/she gave you the order. You may feel that the manner in which he gave the order communicated that he didn't trust your judgment, or wasn't concerned with the impact of the decision upon you. Likewise, the public can feel patronized and resentful if governmental agencies are constantly deciding "what's good for them." Even if it is "good for them" they resent the manner in which the decision was made.

### METHOD II:



One of the main reasons that Method I has been the traditional decision-making style of most agencies is that the only alternative that is seen is Method II. In Method II the agency abdicates all responsibility and simply communicates that whatever the public wants is what they'll get, without communicating the limitations of the agency.

In reality Method II is usually a disguised Method I: the agency will invite the public to participate with no limits, but when the public comes up with the "wrong answer" the agency will reassert its decision-making prerogatives. The result is that the public feels much more betrayed than if the agency had used Method I.

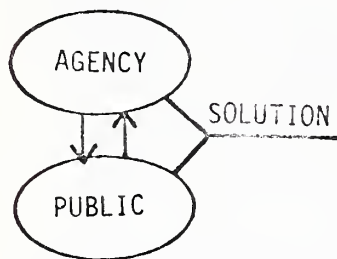




In effect all Method II does is reverse losers. Inherent in either Method I or Method II is the premise that it is acceptable for one side to win and the other side to lose. There is an old law of labor negotiations which states that "if at the end of the negotiations one side feels it has lost, then the negotiations have been unsuccessful."

In other words successful problem-solving rests on the premise that the needs of the agency and the needs of the public are totally interdependent. To create a climate for effective problem-solving we must attempt to avoid a win/lose orientation and stress incorporating all needs.

### METHOD III



Method III differs from Method I in two major ways: 1) the process of arriving at a decision is a shared, visible, and jointly-owned process, and 2) the goal is to arrive at a decision responsive to everyone's needs.

Obviously the diagram above is over-simplified in that it shows the agency in relationship to a single monolithic public when in fact the agency is in relationship to a large number of conflicting publics. The task is not just to create agreement between the agency and a single public but to create a process by which broad areas of general agreement are created between a number of conflicting interests.

### Accountability and Responsibility

This necessitates a shift in the agency's role as the decisionmaker to its role as the creator of a decision-making process. The first role stresses the making of a decision, the second stresses the creation of a climate and methodology for resolving conflict other than through unilateral decision-making on the part of the agency.

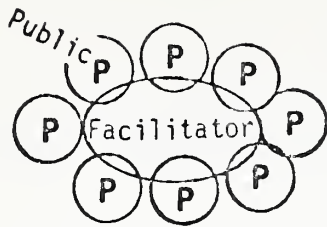
For many managers this shift raises questions about their accountability and responsibility, with a fear that sharing the decision-making with the public is a means of avoiding responsibility. So that we can discuss the issue let's define those two terms, accountability and responsibility. Accountability is that officially designated thing in which the agency (or the law) says "you will be rewarded or punished depending on the outcome of the decision." Responsibility is a feeling; you may feel responsible for some things for which you are not accountable (and you may not feel responsible for some things for which you are accountable).

Agencies are accountable for seeing that the best decision about the uses of resources are made. If, because it is accountable, the agency emphasizes its role as the decision-maker, no one else may feel any responsibility for seeing that the decision is implemented. If, by sharing the decision, people feel responsible for the outcome, then the agency may have more wisely exercised its accountability by insuring that implementation is more likely to result.

One way to diagram the agency's role is by showing the agency as a "Facilitator" of problem-solving between a number of groups, as indicated in the diagram.



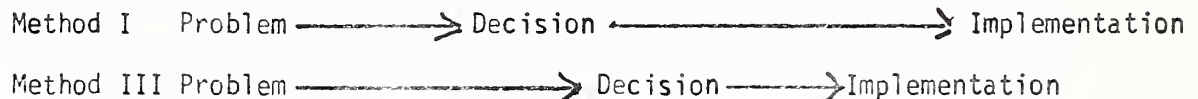




The agency is a participant, in that the needs of the agency must also be recognized or we have reverted to Method II; but the participation is as an equal among interdependent groups rather than the agency's needs being "more equal." The agency's chief contribution is in creating the decision-making process.

### Economy and Efficiency

Anybody who has ever worked with the public -- or a committee, for that matter -- can spot the flaw in Method III. It takes a lot of time for a group of people, particularly a group of people with widely differing interests, to arrive at a decision. One person or a small group can certainly arrive at a decision faster and more economically than can a number of conflicting interests. This makes Method I look much more attractive when you measure efficiency and economy by decision-making time. As the diagram below indicates, the time for decision-making under Method I is usually shorter than under Method III, but at the time that the decision is made in Method I the only person committed to its implementation is the decision-maker. If, through participation in the decision people accept "ownership" or feel responsible for the outcome, then implementation may occur more rapidly in Method III. The ultimate economy may belong to Method III.



### The "Track Record" of Method III

While few people find Method III objectionable philosophically, many when first exposed to the notion, have questions about its practicality. As a result of our consulting and training efforts with a number of agencies in a variety of geographical locations we have had the opportunity to see Method III "in action." Our observation is that Method III can and will work to develop large areas of substantial agreement. Some areas of conflict may remain, and the agency may have to make decisions to resolve these areas. When Method III has worked well, however, the area of common agreement is large enough that the different publics can gain more from the area of agreement than they lose from areas of continuing disagreement.

There is no question that it is difficult to make Method III work when the opposing forces are already polarized into win/lose adversary positions. This underlines the importance of creating a problem-solving climate from the very beginning. The trust necessary for problem-solving will not be present unless the public participation program has been totally open, visible, and responsive to public comment. The publics know how to play "win/lose" just as well as the agency (if you don't believe that, just count how many projects in your agency are held up in court decisions, administrative reviews, etc). The agency must establish the problem-solving orientation as a ground-rule and total philosophy from the very beginning if it hopes to have problem-solving on the decision at the end.



## DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

The public meeting is by far the most widely used, and publicly accepted, form of community involvement. It has a venerable history in this country going back to the New England Town Meeting.

Public meetings can either be exciting, stimulating and informative, or boring, frustrating and a waste of time. The amount of care and attention you take in designing public meetings can determine how effective your meetings will be.

### Why Hold a Meeting?:

Public meetings play a variety of purposes. They are an opportunity to inform the public in detail. They provide an opportunity for citizens to hear other people's ideas and discuss them. They provide opportunities for resolution of differences of opinion. They provide visibility to the decision-making process.

On the other hand, meetings can be a waste of time if they are not carefully integrated into the decision-making process. Meetings can be a waste of time if held so early in the planning process that you don't really have anything yet to discuss. Meetings can be a waste of time if the public could be as adequately informed by a report or brochure. Meetings can be a waste of time if there is no need for citizens to hear the viewpoints of other citizens. And meetings are particularly a waste of time if they are held after decisions are made, rather than at a point in time where the public comment will have an influence upon the decision.

### Types of Meetings:

There are many types of meetings--far more than most meeting designers realize. In fact, the heavy reliance on the public hearing format, one very limited type of meeting, for all kinds of purposes is a major reason why many people view public meetings as ineffective.

Among the major types of public meetings are:

1. Public Hearings - These are formal meetings with a hearing officer, legal requirements for public notice, and a verbatim public record usually maintained by a court stenographer. Participants make formal public statements, often accompanied by written submissions, with little or no interaction between the various participants. Because public hearings often draw a large crowd, leaders of various interest groups frequently feel obliged to make emotional defenses of their groups' positions, often taking positions more extreme than the leader would express privately or in a small group.

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Reprinted from a draft version of the Federal Aviation Administration's Community Involvement Manual, by James L. Creighton





2. Large Group Format - Even if a crowd is large it is possible to conduct a large public meeting without the formal trappings of a public hearing. In a public hearing, for example, the list of speakers is often established at the beginning of the meeting, so that speakers make their presentation when called on regardless of the comments of the person who immediately preceded them. It is still possible in a large public meeting to allow people to interact by speaking upon recognition of a raised hand, or other less formal means of allowing people to interact. A great deal of the difference between a public hearing and other large group formats is the degree of formality with which the meeting leader conducts the meeting. Even if a crowd is large, a skilled meeting leader can create a sense of interaction between the participants.
3. Large Group/Small Group Format - If real discussion is desired, even if the crowd is large, it is possible to break a large crowd into smaller discussion groups, which then report back to the larger group at the end of the meeting. A typical format for this kind of meeting would be:

- a. A thirty-minute presentation describing the technical background of the study and proposing the question to be discussed in the small groups.
- b. One to two hours of small group discussion.
- c. Reports from each discussion group on their opinions or findings.

The small group discussion provides everyone an opportunity to participate intensively, and the reports back to the large group give some feeling of what was discussed in each of the other groups.

4. Panel Format - An alternative method of creating interaction is to select a panel of representatives of different viewpoints who discuss an issue from their point of view, followed either by questions from the audience, or small group discussions. One variant of the panel format which is usable if there is complex technical information is the "Meet the Press" format. In this format a group of reporters is pre-selected to question the technical experts just as they are in the "Meet the Press" television program. The technical experts will make a brief statement, followed by questions from the reporters, followed in turn either by questions from the audience or small group discussions. Since reporters are often skilled interviewers, this often serves to identify the critical issues, and communicate the technical information in a way which is relevant to the public.
5. Workshops - Workshops are usually held for smaller audiences, 25-35 people, and differ from the large group/small group



format in that workshops usually have a specific task or goal to be accomplished. Workshop tasks might be:

- a. Defining alternative actions for noise abatement.
- b. Evaluating a set of alternatives, or
- c. Identifying the economic, energy, environmental and social impacts of the alternatives.

As a result, rather than a general discussion, workshops are characterized by concentration on completing a specific assignment.

6. Coffe Klatch/Kitchen Meeting - Another form of meeting is to meet in the private homes of people in the local community, with crowds of no more than 15-20 people. Typically these meetings are quite informal, with participants drinking coffee and eating refreshments while discussing the issues. Because these meetings are held in private homes, people are more likely to discuss issues person-to-person, rather than as official representatives of interests.
7. Charrette - This is a very intensive form of workshop, usually held in an effort to resolve differences between all major interest groups. This technique is described in some detail in Chapter 9.

#### Selecting a Meeting Format:

In order to choose between these types of meetings, and develop a detailed format, it is necessary first of all to define exactly what you want to accomplish from the meeting. The guiding principle of meeting design is that the format should reflect the purpose of the meeting. There are five basic functions which meetings can serve, although a single meeting may serve more than one of these functions. The five basic functions are:

1. Information Giving: The agency possesses the information and must communicate it in some manner to the public, e.g., announcing the results of a noise study.
2. Information Receiving: In this case the public possesses the information, which could include public perceptions of needs, problems, values, impacts, or reactions to alternatives. In this case the agency must acquire the information held by the public.
3. Interaction: Interaction involves both information giving and information receiving. It also serves the additional purpose of allowing people to test their ideas on the sponsoring agency or other publics. As a result of this interaction people may modify their viewpoints.





4. Consensus Forming/Negotiation: Over and beyond interaction, some meetings are directed towards developing agreement on a single plan or course of action.
5. Summarizing: This is the need at the end of a long process to publicly acknowledge the agreements or decisions that have been reached and reiterate the positions of the different groups towards these agreements.

Each of these functions in turn establishes limitations on the kind of meeting format that is possible if the function is to be served. A few of these limitations and implications are shown below:

1. Information Giving: In information giving the information must flow from the agency to all the various publics, so it is appropriate to have a meeting format which primarily allows for presentations from the agency, with questions from the audience. This means that the classic meeting, with one person at the front of the room making a presentation to an audience in rows, may be a suitable format for this function.
2. Information Receiving: When the function is reversed and the need is to obtain information from the public, then having one person stand at the front of the room addressing an entire audience is an extremely inefficient and uneconomical means of obtaining information. Many more comments could be received from the public, for example, if the audience were broken into small groups and comments were recorded on flipcharts or on 3 X 5 cards.
3. Interaction: Interaction, by its very nature, usually requires that an audience be broken down into groups small enough so that there is time and opportunity for individuals to exchange information and ideas and discuss them all thoroughly. Large public meetings typically provide nothing more than minimal opportunities for interaction. As a result the large group/small group, workshop, or coffee klatch formats are more suitable.
4. Consensus Forming/Negotiation: Like interaction, consensus forming/negotiation also requires intense interaction and usually must be accomplished in some form of small group. In addition, the requirement for consensus formation usually means that some procedure is utilized which assists the group in working towards a single agreed-upon plan rather than allowing simply for an open discussion with no specific product. Some relatively structured format, such as a workshop or charette, is more suitable for this function.
5. Summarizing: Since the function of summarizing is to provide visibility to the entire process which has taken place, it may again be suitable to use large public meetings as the means to



serve the summarizing function. In this way individuals and groups can be seen taking positions and describing their involvement in the planning process which has preceded this meeting.

Several other factors should be taken into consideration in selecting a meeting format. These include:

1. Anticipated Audience Size: If the audience is anticipated to be several hundred people, this may dictate the meeting format. Remember, though, even a large audience can be broken into small discussion groups if that is the kind of meeting you need, and if the meeting facility is chosen carefully.
2. Intensity of Interest in the Issue: If people are highly interested in the topic they are more willing to participate in workshops or other intense formats, rather than a more passive form of meeting.
3. Degree of Controversy: If an issue is extremely controversial, and the agency is somewhat suspect, then the public may resist being broken down into small groups, feeling that it is an attempt on the part of the agency to manipulate by "dividing and conquering." Also meetings should not be designed in which all "environmentalists" or all "pro-aviation" people are segregated into homogeneous groups for discussion. This has a tendency to reinforce the antagonism between the groups and further polarize positions.

#### Time and Place of Meetings:

Meetings should be held at a time and place convenient to the public, with the convenience of staff as a secondary consideration. Usually this means that meetings will be held in the evening, although some circumstances will allow for afternoon meetings. If a meeting is aimed primarily at representatives of other governmental agencies or interests, then they may prefer daytime meetings.

One of the first considerations in selecting a meeting place would be whether the facilities are adequate for the meeting format which you wish to utilize. (See section on Seating Arrangements below.) You may also want the meeting to be held away from the airport, on "neutral" ground. Other issues which you should consider in selecting a meeting place would include:

- a. Central location
- b. Public transportation access
- c. Suitable parking
- d. Safety of the area.





### Pre-Meeting Publicity:

If a meeting is aimed at a relatively small group, on an invitational basis, then pre-meeting publicity will be quite limited. But if a meeting is an effort to reach the broad general public, then a major element in the success of the meeting will be the adequacy of the pre-meeting publicity. Among the pre-meeting publicity techniques which you may wish to employ are:

- . Issue a press release/spot announcement.
- . An announcement in the Federal Register.
- . Develop a press kit or technical summary for the press.
- . Visit members of the press to arrange for feature stories.
- . Purchase display advertising or radio and TV announcements.
- . Have community organizations and interest groups advertise the meeting to their own membership.
- . Have a community organization sponsor the meeting.

Your Public Information or Public Affairs Officer--if you have one--may be able to provide you with other ideas.

### Meeting Logistics:

There are numerous logistic issues which must be taken care of if the meeting is to be a success. To assist you in identifying these issues, a Public Meeting Checklist is attached at the end of this chapter. This checklist is taken from a guide on effective public meetings which is distributed by the Environmental Protection Agency.\*

### Seating Arrangements:

The seating arrangements of a meeting are a direct reflection of the type of meeting which you wish to hold. Room arrangements reflect the relationship between participants. For example, in Figure A (p.73) one can quickly see that the source of all information is the individuals at the front of the room. This seating arrangement establishes a relationship in which all participants talk to the meeting leaders at the front of the room, rather than to each other. As a result, this seating arrangement may be useful and appropriate in a situation where the major function of the meeting is information giving, but if you would like to encourage interaction between participants, then you will want to change this seating arrangement. One alternative would be Figure B., which allows people in the audience to see each other more easily, and microphones are placed throughout the room so that people do not have to come to the

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\*Guide 1 Effective Public Meetings by James F. Ragan, Jr., available from U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Affairs, A-107 Washington, D. C.





Microphone



Figure A

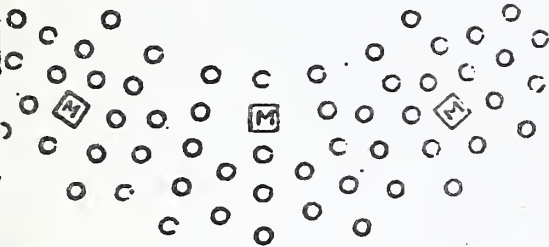


Figure B.

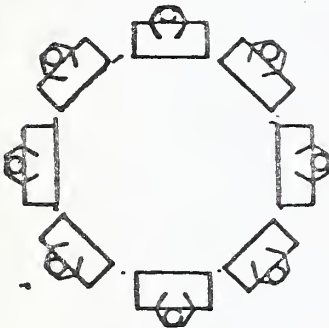


Figure C

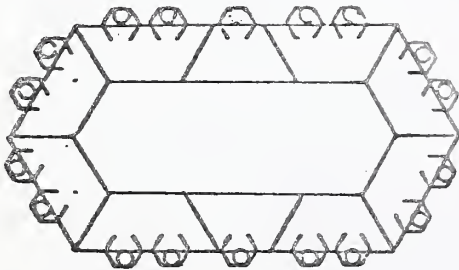


Figure D

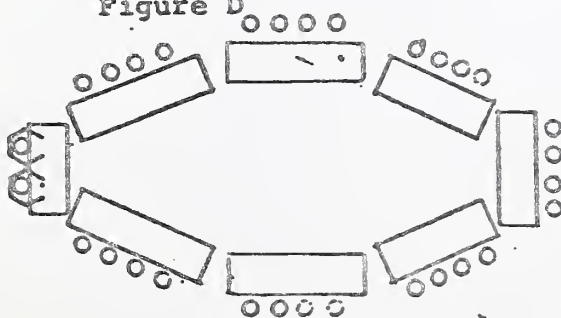


Figure E

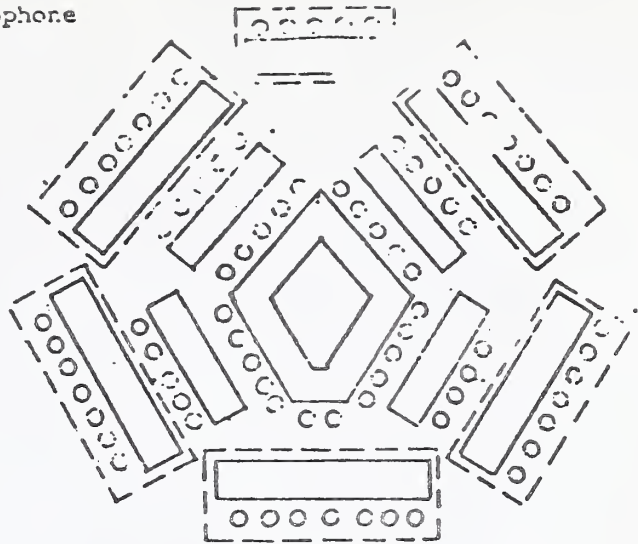


Figure F

Flip Chart

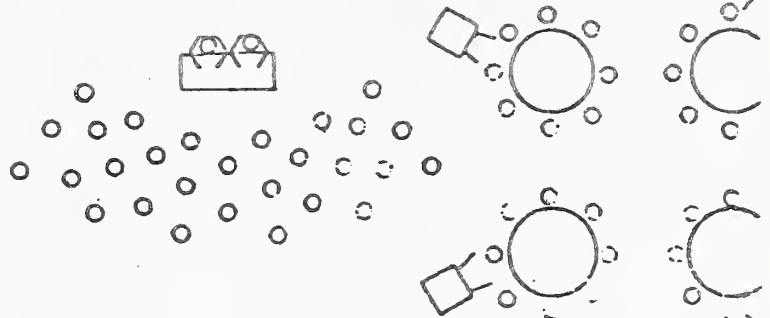


Figure G

Meeting Leader

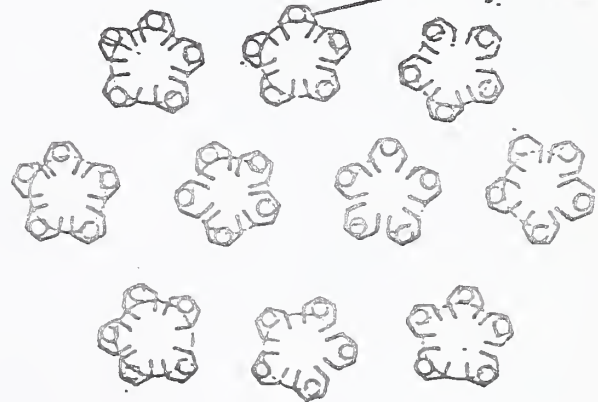


Figure H





front of the room in order to participate. The ideal arrangements for interaction or consensus forming/negotiation are the nearly circular formations shown in Figures C, D, & E. The major differences between these formations are the number of participants and the kinds of tables which are available. If there are a large number of individuals but you still wish to retain the conditions for interaction, then an arrangement such as that as shown in Figure F. would be appropriate. The seating arrangement shown in Figure G. is appropriate for the large group/small group format. The audience first meets in a general assembly in the left of the diagram, and then adjoins to the circular tables for the small group discussions. If no room is available which will accommodate this many tables and chairs, then it may be useful to hold the meeting in a school where the large meeting can be in an assembly hall, with small group discussions in classrooms. An alternative format which can be used when there will be small discussion groups is shown in Figure H. This allows both for small discussion groups as well as a general session, with people simply remaining in their seats at the circular tables during the general session.

Naturally there are numerous variations in all the configurations shown above. These examples simply serve to illustrate that seating arrangements are a significant part of the meeting format. Hopefully these alternatives will encourage you to consider the most appropriate seating arrangements for the type of meeting you wish, rather than adapting the traditional seating format only because it is habitual.

#### Meeting Leadership:

The leadership style adopted by the meeting leader is also a major component in the over-all effectiveness of the meeting. Even if great care has been taken to design the meeting format most appropriate for the interaction, with a seating arrangement that tends to encourage interaction; if the meeting is led in a rigid, authoritarian manner, public reaction to the agency may still be negative. If a meeting is run in a highly authoritarian manner, then the public has little stake in maintaining order--their needs may be best met by disorder--so that a heavy-handed approach in fact may lead to losing control of the meeting. If the style of meeting leadership is such that participants feel consulted and believe the meeting is being run on behalf of everybody, then the participants have a substantial stake in maintaining order and supporting any procedural suggestions of the leader. The critical element in effective meeting leadership appears to be that the audience feels that the meeting is "theirs" rather than just the agency's. When participants believe that the meeting is everybody's meeting they are likely to observe ground rules and even assist the meeting leader in maintaining order.

There are definite skills to conducting meetings in a facilitative, rather than authoritarian manner. Locating a person possessing these skills should be a major criterion in selecting the meeting leader. Traditionally agency leaders have always conducted public meetings. But if the agency leader is not also a skilled meeting leader, then it may



be more appropriate to have the agency leader open the meeting, make a short presentation, and then hand the meeting on to someone who is a skilled meeting leader.

#### Recording Public Comment:

The sponsoring agency needs to keep a record of the comment that was made in the public meeting, and the public wants to know that its comments are in fact being heard. In a public hearing a court reporter keeps a verbatim transcript, which becomes a formal record of the meeting. However this is a very formal procedure, and most publics will never read the public record (for which there is usually a charge). One of the most effective techniques for both keeping a summary of the meeting, and indicating to a public that they are being heard, is to keep a summary of the meeting on a flipchart. The public is able to watch the summary as it is being taken, and are informed that if the summary is inaccurate they may request changes. If possible, the flipchart sheets are then posted on the wall so that people may see a visible record of the meeting. Agencies that have used this method have discovered that the summary is usually far more helpful than reading a verbatim transcript, and also provides a quick record of the meeting which can be distributed to others as a document of the meeting. If a more complete record is needed, a tape recording of the meeting can also be kept. But experience indicates that if the flipchart summary is well done, the tapes are rarely listened to. One limitation of the flip chart method is in very large meetings where the flipchart cannot be seen. An overhead projector with a continuous roll of acetate might be used as an alternative. The disadvantage to this approach is that the summary appears on the screen only for a short period of time and then is not visible to the public afterward. A verbatim transcript is still required for a formal public hearing.

#### Providing Feedback to the Public:

One fundamental rule of meetings is to provide feedback to the public on what you heard. One agency even followed their public meetings by sending out a one to two page report entitled "What We Heard." Other agencies have typed up the flipchart summary of the meeting and distributed it to everyone in attendance, as well as other interested individuals and groups, with requests for additional comments or reactions. Other items that should be addressed in this feedback would include:

1. What will be done with the public comment.
2. Any decisions that have resulted from the meeting.
3. Future opportunities for participation in the community involvement program.





## PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

1. Meeting Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Meeting Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Formal \_\_\_\_\_ Informal
3. Meeting Format: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Meeting Budget: \_\_\_\_\_ Prepared \_\_\_\_\_ Approved
5. Advisory Committee Approval? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Identifying Potential Participants  
    Interests identified and categorized? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Organizations and individuals identified? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Meeting Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hours \_\_\_\_\_
8. Meeting Place(s): \_\_\_\_\_

---

Central location? \_\_\_\_\_  
Public transportation access? \_\_\_\_\_  
Suitable parking? \_\_\_\_\_  
Safe area? \_\_\_\_\_  
Adequate facilities? \_\_\_\_\_  
Rental fee? \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Does the rental fee include  
    Lecterns? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Speaker sound system? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Blackboards or easels? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Projectors? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Tape recorders? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Chairs? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Tables? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Meeting room set-up? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Meeting room clean-up? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Meeting Space  
    Total number of people expected: \_\_\_\_\_  
    General session  
        Seating arrangement type: \_\_\_\_\_  
        Adequate space? \_\_\_\_\_  
    Discussion session  
        Number of small groups: \_\_\_\_\_  
        Seating arrangement type: \_\_\_\_\_  
        Number of people in each group: \_\_\_\_\_  
        Adequate space? \_\_\_\_\_



## PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

### 10. Meeting Sponsorship

Agency? \_\_\_\_\_

Other Organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted? \_\_\_\_\_

### 11. Leader Selection

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted \_\_\_\_\_

### 12. Speaker Selection

Identified? \_\_\_\_\_

Speakers invited? \_\_\_\_\_

Speakers have accepted? \_\_\_\_\_

### 13. Moderator Selection

How many needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Identified? \_\_\_\_\_

Moderators invited? \_\_\_\_\_

Moderators have accepted? \_\_\_\_\_

### 14. Agenda Development

Questions developed? \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule developed? \_\_\_\_\_

### 15. Background Information Development

Information to be provided: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics identified? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics ordered? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics received? \_\_\_\_\_

Written information completed? \_\_\_\_\_

Distribution Methods: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of copies: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies reproduced? \_\_\_\_\_

Copies distributed? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics to be used in oral presentations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Graphics identified? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics ordered? \_\_\_\_\_

Display equipment ordered? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics received? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics to be used in discussion groups? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Graphics identified? \_\_\_\_\_

How many copies? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics ordered? \_\_\_\_\_

Graphics received? \_\_\_\_\_





## PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

### 16. Publicity

Methods selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation ordered? \_\_\_\_\_  
Material prepared? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of copies needed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Material placed and/or distributed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Personal follow-up completed? \_\_\_\_\_

### 17. Meeting Arrangements

For the general session

Lecterns, chairs, tables obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker system obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Projectors/screens obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Space for wall displays? \_\_\_\_\_  
Registration table/space? \_\_\_\_\_  
Personnel for registration? \_\_\_\_\_  
Refreshments (and personnel)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name tags obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Room arrangements made? \_\_\_\_\_  
Audio/visual equipment set up? \_\_\_\_\_  
Audio/visual equipment tested? \_\_\_\_\_  
Ventilation/heating adequate? \_\_\_\_\_

For discussion sessions

Number of easels/blackboards: \_\_\_\_\_  
Easels/blackboards obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Easels/blackboards delivered? \_\_\_\_\_  
Newsprint for easels obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Supplies (pencils/paper/chalk/  
erasers/felt tip pens/masking  
tape/thumb tacks) obtained? \_\_\_\_\_  
Room arrangements made? \_\_\_\_\_  
Ventilation/heating adequate? \_\_\_\_\_

Luncheon arrangements for conference? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Meeting Clean-up  
Facilities restored & cleaned? \_\_\_\_\_  
Equipment returned? \_\_\_\_\_

### 18. Recording the Proceedings

Methods to be used: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel/equipment obtained? \_\_\_\_\_

### 19. Orienting Discussion Moderators

Orientation meeting scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_  
Orientation meeting held? \_\_\_\_\_  
Moderators have prepared materials? \_\_\_\_\_  
Final moderator meeting? \_\_\_\_\_



## PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

### 20. Reporting to the Decision-making Body

The body(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reporting format: \_\_\_\_\_

Report made? \_\_\_\_\_

### 21. Reporting to the Public

Formats used: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Report prepared? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of copies required: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies reproduced? \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting completed? \_\_\_\_\_

### 22. Meeting Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation completed? \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations made? \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations accepted? \_\_\_\_\_



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR EXECUTIVES

### SECOND DAY

8:00- 9:00	ACTIVITY 14:	The Responsible Federal Official's Role in Public Participation (Presentation)	Creighton
9:00 -9:45	ACTIVITY 15:	Alternative Techniques for Public Participation (Presentation)	
9:45-10:15	BREAK		
10:15-11:00	ACTIVITY 16:	Identifying Alternative Techniques for Public Participation (Team Exercise)	
11:00-11:15	ACTIVITY 17:	Team Reports	
11:15-11:30	ACTIVITY 18:	Integrating Public Participation into the Decision-Making Process--A Thought Process for Designing Public Participation Programs (Presentation)	
11:30-12:00	ACTIVITY 19:	Who Is the Public? (Presentation/Class Activity)	
12:00- 1:00	LUNCH		
1:00- 2:30	ACTIVITY 20:	Designing a Public Participation Program (Team Exercise)	
2:30- 3:00	ACTIVITY 21:	Team Reports	
3:00- 4:00	ACTIVITY 22:	The SCS Direction in Public Participation. "Where we go from here."	Davis <sup>1</sup> Berg <sup>2</sup>
4:00	Adjourn		

<sup>1</sup>April 3-4 Seminar

<sup>2</sup>May 14-15 Seminar





ACTIVITY 14

NOTES: Presentation on THE RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL OFFICIAL'S ROLE  
IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. See readings on "The Executive's  
Role in Public Participation" on Pg. 92, and "Creating Organiza-  
tional Climates for Citizen Participation, Pg. 95.



ACTIVITY 15

NOTES: Presentation on ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.  
See reading on "Community Involvement Techniques, Pg. 100.



TEAM EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES  
FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Purpose:

1. To identify alternative methods of obtaining public participation.

Procedure:

1. Select a Recorder.
2. Select a Spokesperson who will give a summary of your team's accomplishments to the class.
3. Develop a "brainstorming" list of as many ways as possible to inform and involve the public. Do not spend more than 30 minutes on the brainstorming list.
4. As a group discuss and evaluate the list you have developed and prepare a 5-minute report indicating those techniques you have identified which you believe would be most useful.
5. Be prepared to give your report at 10:50 a.



ACTIVITY 17

NOTES: Team Reports on ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.





ACTIVITY 18

NOTES: Presentation on INTEGRATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INTO THE  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. See reading on Pg. 118.



NOTES: Presentation/Class Activity on WHO'S THE PUBLIC?  
See reading on "Who is the Public?", Pg. 126.

- Silent Majority (Why)
  - Individuals don't feel they have a stake
  - " feel adequately represented by the vocal minority
  - " don't feel they can change anything
- Vocal minority as individuals tend to focus on a single issue eg. education, eg. housing, water
- Public Participation as related to the silent majority
  1. Inform them of their stake
  2. Need to reach the full range of representative values (Target Public)
  3. Provide visible points of access -- need to show results from the participation process (otherwise you merely return these people to the silent majority).

### Levels of Public

1. Elected officials
2. Staff of agencies
3. Leaders of organized groups
4. Membership of " "
5. General Public



TEAM EXERCISE: DESIGNING A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Purpose

1. To utilize a "thought process" which will assist in the design of public participation programs.

Procedure:

1. Select a Spokesperson to present a report on your team's activities to the total group.
2. Select a Recorder.
3. As a team, identify the INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC and the INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC for each stage of planning.
4. As a team also identify the Scope of Publics Involved for each stage of planning.
5. Identify those public participation techniques which your team believes to be most suitable to accomplish the Information Exchange for each planning stage.
6. Be ready to give your report back to the total group at 2:00.





PLANNING STAGE	INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC	INFORMATION TO PUBLIC	SCOPE OF PUBLICS	LIKELY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES
ISSUE IDENTIFICATION			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
DECISION-MAKING			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
CHECKPOINT PROCESS			Public To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	

*George [unclear]  
 where [unclear]  
 want to [unclear]  
 of the [unclear]  
 of each  
 step.  
 this is the  
 key to what  
 it is you  
 want from  
 the public  
 & what you  
 will have  
 to give the  
 public in  
 order to  
 get what  
 you want.  
 If you don't  
 expect to decide  
 on a level &  
 to [unclear]*



ACTIVITY 21

NOTES: Team Reports on DESIGNING A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.



NOTES: Class Discussion on WHERE WE GO FROM HERE.

- Look for links between purpose & product
- Look for ~~meaningful~~ signs
- Look for clarity in understandable



READINGS ACCOMPANYING SECOND DAY

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. THE EXECUTIVE'S ROLE IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION by James L. Creighton	92
2. CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, by James L. Creighton	95
3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES by James L. Creighton	100
4. DESIGNING A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM by James L. Creighton	118
5. WHO IS THE PUBLIC? by James L. Creighton	126





## The Executive's Role in Public Participation

While typically the day-to-day direction of public participation program is in the hands of staff, the Executive still plays a significant role in public participation. Some of the most significant ways in which an Executive can contribute include:

1. The Executive can provide a model of open and visible communication with all publics. One Executive we know of had a rule that his planners could meet with "environmentalists" only with his express permission and then only with two planners present. It's little wonder that he was beset with constant environmental challenges to agency projects as he was systematically breeding suspicion and ill-feeling. In effect he was making it an issue of agency disloyalty to be seen in the presence of an "environmentalist." There is no way that effective public participation can work in such a climate. Effective public participation requires a problem-solving climate in which dialogue between the various publics is encouraged and rewarded. One way that an Executive can encourage this kind of communication is to model this behavior by meeting periodically with representatives of the full range of interests to informally discuss issues and concerns. In addition the Executive may want to attend -- and encourage the staff to attend -- the meetings of the various interest groups and establish personal communication links with representatives of the various interests. The Executive must clearly communicate the value he places on open communication with the various interests.
2. Consider the Impact of Schedule Deadlines and Budget Constraints on Public Participation

Because public participation is a "new ballgame" for many Executives they may not yet always remember that public participation may require additional planning time and planning money. The economy in public participation comes from the greater commitment and increased likelihood of implementation, but often entails increased front-end planning costs. In many public participation programs the greatest additional time requirements are created by the need to develop interim documents designed for the public and preparing for meetings rather than a single document at the end of each planning phase as was formerly the case. While there are no specific regulations on the percentage of a planning budget which should be devoted to public participation (and not a great deal of "hard" data available), estimates run at about 10% and up. Naturally this varies somewhat with the level of public interest, size of the planning effort, and geographical area involved. When an Executive neglects to consider these additional time and budget constraints it may be simply because he is still not entirely re-oriented to the new planning demands, but it may be read by staff as a lack of commitment or support to public participation. To communicate support for public participation requires a demonstrated awareness that public participation does have impact on budgets and time schedules.

3. Provide a Model of Problem-solving in Your Own Management Style

There are some built-in stresses between relating to the public in a



highly participative problem-solving relationship while operating in organizations that are hierarchical and stress unilateral decision-making authority. If the internal management style of the organization does not stress mutual problem-solving, then there is little training and modeling for staff of the skills necessary for working with the public in a participative style. In addition if there is little recognition of the values of participation in internal decision-making it is hard to convince staff that management really supports those values in relationship to the public. On the other hand if there is an effort to stress mutual problem-solving internally then public participation becomes a natural expression of the attitudes and skills already existing in the organization.

#### 4. Things to Look for in Your Management Review of Public Participation Programs

##### a) Insist on a link between public comment and the planning outcomes.

If public participation is worth doing at all it must be done on the assumption that the comment of the public will have a guiding influence on the planning products produced. Yet in those cases where public participation is "tacked on" to the planning process the technical studies often operate rather independently of the public comment. As a result the expenditure of funds and time to obtain the public comment produces little of value, while the public may feel betrayed because their participation produces little direct impact. The Executive can encourage a climate for creating a clearer link between the public participation and the planning by orienting his review towards the question: "How did the public comment shape this stage of planning?"

##### b. Examine the range of publics which have been involved

One of the most typical flaws in designing public participation programs is the failure to include significant publics who have a major stake in the outcome of a decision. When they do discover the planning that is taking place they then feel a resentment towards the agency for "excluding" them which may continue to dictate their reactions to the planning process. We believe, as a result, that it is imperative to systematically target those publics that are most likely to be affected in terms of economics, use, or values and ensure they are aware of the planning process which is taking place. Often this simply means that the full range of organized groups is invited to participate. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to involve an identifiable interest which is not yet organized, e.g. summer home owners along a stretch of river. In such a case the agency may have to use Assessor's lists or some other means to identify these people, and may need to assist them in getting organized so that their representatives may speak for them in the planning process. The Agency always looks better telling them of their need to be involved, rather than explaining why they were not notified earlier. Once the publics have been targeted some mechanism should be created to measure the degree to which the targeted publics have participated in each stage of planning. If





significant groups have failed to participate it may be necessary to use other public participation techniques or personal contacts to reach these groups. Rather than have groups "lay back" and then oppose a plan on the grounds that they didn't participate earlier, it is better to be certain that an effort has been made to obtain their participation at each stage of planning. While legal considerations should not be the guiding motivation for public participation the fact remains that the Agency's legal case, in case of litigation, is strengthened by its documentation of efforts to include all groups. By questioning staff in this area the Executive may both strengthen the documentation and encourage efforts to incorporate all identifiable interests. Once the Agency has clearly and demonstrably provided the opportunity then it is that group's choice whether or not to participate.

c. Check for "Visibility" Mechanisms Throughout the Process

By its nature planning may be very "public" at some points and highly technical and low profile during others. Yet if the planning loses "visibility" during these low profile periods it may also lose credibility. People trust what they can see. Newsletters and Citizens' Committees are examples of techniques which are sometimes used to keep things visible. The Executive may be able to pinpoint spots in the planning process where the Agency is very busy but the public could lose sight of what is occurring.

d. "Role-Play" the Various Interests as Part of the Management Review

Many of the problems of public involvement can be avoided when Agency staff learn enough about the feelings of the different interests to be able to "role-play" the different groups technical reactions to upcoming events, e.g. "If I were an environmentalist I would worry that this project would encourage further development." The Executive can encourage this kind of thinking by asking staff questions such as: "How would you likely feel about this issue if you were a summer home owner (fisherman, developer, etc.)?" This kind of "role-play" cannot substitute for the actual participation of these groups, but it can sometimes prevent unusually foolish decisions that will create an adversary relationship with these interests.

e. Insist that Presentations, Brochures, etc. be in Language Which Is Understandable to the Public

Often the combination of "technicalese" and agency lingo make Agency presentations incomprehensible and reinforce the image that the Agency is trying to put up barriers to public comprehension. Because the Executive is often an organizational layer or two away from the people preparing these presentations he/she may be able to pinpoint particularly blatant cases and insist upon translation into language the public (let alone the Executive) can understand. One rule of thumb to follow: the public is quickly snowed by materials on technical methodology, but is often able to grapple quickly with the underlying assumptions and basic values choices. By designing presentations to focus these "public interest issues" the public feels more included and less inclined to see the Agency as putting up barriers.



## CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

by James L. Creighton

Historically, citizen participation has been mandated upon organizations by legislation, by court decision, or in some cases by an executive of the agency. In very few cases has citizen participation begun or been sustained solely by the deep-seated commitment of those parts of the organization required to implement it. As a result, citizen participation has been "added on" (some would even say "piled on") to existing procedures, policies and values which may at times be in complete contradiction with the basic principles and practices of citizen participation. The result can be either that citizen participation changes the organization, or the organization can mobilize its "immune system" to repel the threat of citizen participation genuinely having an impact on organizational decision making or operations.

Experience suggests that successfully introducing citizen participation in an organization produces a number of far-reaching organizational effects, many of them unanticipated. Often the introduction of citizen participation in an organization initially produces a time of considerable turmoil and controversy. But a great deal of lost energy and resources caused by this turmoil could be saved if it was recognized that introducing citizen participation to an organization is a major organizational intervention and worthy of a carefully designed strategy of organizational change.

This workshop will attempt to identify some of the most common organizational effects that have been produced by introducing citizen participation in organizations and discuss how to develop a more systematic program for introducing and sustaining citizen participation within an organization.

### Why the Need to Look at the Total Organization

Most organizations that have developed effective citizen participation discovered that citizen participation is not just a set of procedures that are followed, or a series of operations, but is really "a way of doing business." In those agencies where citizen participation is reduced to a few pro forma public hearings, etc., participation is usually worthless and a source of frustration both to the public and the agency itself. If it is to be effective, the introduction of citizen participation will represent a major organizational change requiring significant changes in how decisions are made, how performance is measured, the management style of the organization, and the

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Reprinted from a paper presented to the National Conference on Citizen Participation.





relationships between functions within the organization. As a result, citizen participation cannot be implemented simply by issuing a policy that it will be done, and providing a budget to see that it occurs. Organizational changes do not take place in isolation, rather they are imbedded in the context of other organizational policies, values and relationships on which citizen participation impacts, and is in turn, impacted.

Two concepts discussed by organizational theorists help explain this phenomena. The first, taken from Operations Research, emphasizes that an organization is a "system" with all parts of the system inter-related. Change made in one part of the system, without supportive or reinforcing changes made in other parts of the system, will usually result in the extinction of that change. In an organizational system, just as in an ecological system, you can "never do just one thing." The result of introducing citizen participation into an organization will produce many impacts on other parts of the system, and the ability to implement citizen participation will be greatly influenced by the degree to which other parts of the system are either reinforcing and supportive of citizen participation, or see it as a threat or a danger to the system.

A similar concept is taken from anthropology to describe the unique "culture" of an organization. By "culture" theorists are emphasizing less the formal policies and procedures, and placing greater emphasis on organizational values, philosophy, life style, informal social system, roles, history, etc. As the result of the preexisting culture, some organizations may be relatively receptive to citizen participation, while others will be antagonistic.

Both concepts are important, because the problems of implementing citizen participation within an organization are both formal systemic problems, and problems of pre-existing values, philosophy and roles which, by their very nature, are somewhat difficult to articulate or to alter.

#### Examples of Organizational Problems in the Implementation of Citizen Participation

Some examples of the problems which occur when citizen participation is introduced into an organization are indicated below. This list is by no means exhaustive -- undoubtedly additional problems will be identified during the workshop -- but should demonstrate the inter-connectedness between citizen participation and other organizational issues:

1. Lack of integration in planning process: One of the most frequent problems of citizen participation is that the citizen participation activities are tacked onto an existing planning process -- typically at the end -- in such a way that they are almost totally unrelated to the existing planning process. The result, typically, is that citizen participation is meaningless, or major delays or other organizational costs are incurred trying to modify the planning process to fit the citizen participation. Certainly one major step in preparing the organization for citizen participation is to insure that the planning for other decision-making process and the citizen participation process are completely integrated.



2. Lack of impact: Another frequent problem is that while the procedures or practices of citizen participation are observed, it is equally observable to the public that nothing changes as a result of citizen participation. This can be the result either of the lack of integration between citizen participation and the decision-making processes, because agency values are resistant to the ideas expressed by the public, or the agency feels so constrained by legal or political requirements that it is unable to respond.

3. Acceptance of Overall Policy; One problem facing the on-the-ground planner is attempting to conduct a citizen participation program within the confines of the existing national policy of an agency. In many cases, there is considerably better citizen participation in the local implementation decisions (where to build a dam, how to manage a forest, whether or not a road should be built) than on national policy issues. Clearly the local decisions have to be related to national policy, yet at the same time, no one can design a citizen program to get consensus at a local level if there is no agreement nor sense of participation in national policy.

4. Contradiction Between Democracy and Authoritarian Management: There is a fundamental values conflict between classic organizational values of efficiency, economy and control, and the fundamental egalitarian premise of democracy, which in turn produces assumptions of equal participation in decision-making, equal access to information, etc. The reality is that very few of our bureaucracies make any pretense of being run on democratic principles; yet at the same time, members of the bureaucracy are being asked to go out and deal with the public in a democratic way. Not only does this anomaly make the job of the person who is running the program particularly difficult, but it often results in major problems in attempting to arrive at any consensus with the public when the decisions in the organization are being made in such a way that the information provided by the public is either ignored by the management, or so filtered as it passes through the bureaucratic layers that it reaches the management in a watered down form which has little impact. The result is that the citizen participation professional is often caught in a position of being "unable to deliver" because of his/her lack of influence within his/her own organization.

5. Location of Citizen Participation Within the Organization: The point above is intimately tied in with where in the organization responsibility for citizen participation is located. A number of organizations have located citizen participation responsibility well below the level at which most major decisions are made. The result is that the citizen participation professional becomes simply a messenger between management and public, and is often far better informed of public feelings about issues than he or she is about management positions. Related to this issue is the whole problem of decentralization of decision-making. The logic of citizen participation tends to strengthen the idea of decentralized decision-making, so that the person dealing with the public is also the person responsible for the decision. The logic of large bureaucracies frequently runs quite counter to this, constantly encouraging greater and greater centralization of decision-making in order to insure control over an unwieldy bureaucracy. One problem, if decision-making is located too many organizational layers away from public contact, is that the decision maker really doesn't deal with the emotional reality of the public sentiment. A part of the public's message is always the intensity with which it feels certain things. When reading a digest or





abstract of a number of highly controversial meetings, it is easy for this intensity to become distant and easy to dismiss. It is my bias that every decision-maker should periodically have the experience of sitting across the table from a group of real live publics, in order to understand what citizen participation is all about.

6. Isolation of Related Processes: Since public involvement is frequently seen as an "add-on" to the normal decision-making or planning process, it is often organizationally isolated from other processes such as the environmental impact statement or social impact assessment. These three processes are, in fact, intimately related, and can be integrated in a manner which can lead to economies in all three processes if they are treated as part and parcel and the same process. Frequently, however, citizen participation is located in one part of the organization, the EIS process in another, and social impact assessment is frequently not even done by the organization, but is contracted out to a private consultant. The result is that these three related processes of impact assessment do not sufficiently impact on each other, and there is a repetitious and wasteful overlap between the three processes.

7. Measuring Performance/Accountability: Almost invariably performance in a large organization is measured by a program's "going smoothly." It is also measured by the fact that the project was completed on budget within schedule. The fact that this was accomplished at the expense of ignoring or minimizing public concern about the project frequently does not emerge for several years until the project approaches the construction stage, long after the efficient project manager is promoted far away from the project. Qualities which make an individual successful in the noisy, smelly, emotionally-laden world of citizen participation are often not adequately measured by organizations, so that the person responsible for citizen participation has few rewards for doing a good job.

8. Time Lag Between Planning and Implementation: One problem with a project of large magnitude is that there is often a considerable time lag between planning, in which the public has been involved, and the implementation or construction phase. The result is that public sentiment or values have changed, conditions have changed on the ground, new publics have become a part of the political equation, etc. The result can be that while there may have been a high level of consensus obtained in support of the project, by the time it is built, or implemented, that consensus may have broken down. From the agency's point of view, this makes the process messy, irrational and often quite "unfair." The only solution that has been generated so far is to have some kind of continuing citizen participation program, or at least a continuing information program, during the interim between the initial decision, and implementation or construction. The problem is that organizationally this kind of continuing relationship to the public usually falls between the cracks of any organizational unit. One unit is responsible for getting the decision made, another is responsible for getting it implemented, but the organizational unit which carries between one and the other is typically a headquarters unit, which has no mandate to form continuing contact with the public during the interim stage.

9. Inter-Disciplinary Approach: Relating to the public almost invariably requires a combination of disciplines or a "team approach." Yet people do not become a team simply by designating them as such. Effective teams are "built." Most effective teams have worked together for a number of years and



their effectiveness is a result of trust and confidence in each other which is the result of that prolonged period of working together. But in the modern organization, teams are thrown together quickly and are expected to act like a team despite the fact that members of the team have no history with each other. Not only do they not have a history with each other but typically they are representatives of different disciplines, with different data basis and values assumptions which produce different ways of approaching problems. Expertise in "team building," has been developed, but is rarely employed with temporary teams.

10. Misperception of the Organization's Commitment to Citizen Participation: Citizen Participation represents such a departure in the normal way of doing business for most agencies, that it usually takes several years for people responsible for implementing it to really believe that the organization is committed to it. Typically, the head administrator expresses a commitment to citizen participation and then moves on to other problems within the organization. Frequently in dealing with these other problems, the administrator makes decisions or announces policies which are seen by on-the-ground agency staff as contradicting citizen participation, and therefore indicating a lack of "real" support for citizen participation. An effort to speed up planning time or reduce staff may be perceived as "proof" that the head of the agency is not really committed to citizen participation.





- Advisory Committees - if effective they must be representative of the full range of values & concerns. Don't stick to desk. They need to have a clear assignment & end point. Use for technical purposes, then go public for evaluation.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

### A SHORT CATALOGUE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

There are a large number of community involvement techniques available, and because community involvement is a relatively new field, there are many new techniques being developed constantly.

This chapter contains a short catalogue of sixteen frequently used community involvement techniques. A short description is provided for each technique, plus a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the techniques. An index of the techniques is provided below:

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### INTERVIEWS:

Description of the Technique: One technique for quickly assessing public sentiment is to conduct a series of interviews with key individuals representing the range of publics most likely to be interested or affected by the study. The kinds of information which might be discussed in an interview would include the amount of interest in the study, the goals and values of the interest group the individual represents, the manner in which the interest group would like to participate in the study, political climate and relationship between the various interest groups. Interviews can either be non-structured, or the interviewer can prepare a list of questions or topics to be discussed in each interview, so that responses can be easily compared and summarized. Since there

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Reprinted from a draft version of the FAA Community Involvement Manual, by James L. Creighton.



are skills involved in effective interviewing, interviews should be conducted by somebody with experience or training in interviewing.

Federal agencies are required to get approval from the Office of Management and Budget for all surveys and questionnaires. Structured interviews may fall under these approval requirements, so federal agencies may find it preferable to stay with unstructured interviews.

#### Advantages of Interviews:

- . Interviews can provide a quick picture of the political situation in which a study will be conducted.
- . Interviews can provide important information about how various interests wish to participate.
- . Personal relationships can be built with key individuals and more direct communication links established with the publics. Once communication has been established through an interview, individuals and groups are more likely to participate.

#### Disadvantages:

- . Poor interviewing can create a negative impression of the individual.
- . Interviews may not be entirely representative of public sentiment.

#### FIELD OFFICES:

Description of the Technique: Field offices are local offices of the sponsoring agency established in the community where noise problems or other environmental impacts resulting from the airport are occurring. Typically a field office is placed in a highly visible part of the community--such as downtown storefront or shopping center--so that the largest number of people will know of its existence. The field office's staff are able to answer questions and solicit opinions from the local community. A field office is designed to encourage "drop-ins" and other informal interactions with the community, with exhibits, charts, maps, brochures and other materials on display. Field office staff are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the local community. Field offices can also be the meeting place for workshops, task force meetings, open houses or other events. This reinforces the field office as the focal point for participation in the study.

Field offices have been used successfully at a number of larger airports(including Sea-Tac and Los Angeles) and the airports have discovered that they are an important communication to the neighborhood that the airport is interested in the surrounding community and is willing to make an effort to communicate with local neighbors about airport-related problems.





#### Advantages of Field Offices:

- . Field offices provide a means of informal interaction with the local community at the convenience of the residents.
- . Field offices communicate the value the agency places upon community feelings.
- . Staff occupying field offices often obtain a better understanding of community needs and desires.

#### Disadvantages of Field Offices:

- . Field offices can be costly to staff and operate.
- . Field office staff often experience torn loyalties between their commitments to the sponsoring agency and the concerns of the local public.

#### HOTLINE:

Description of the Technique: A hotline is an "easy to remember" telephone number which is publicized through repetition in brochures, reports, news stories, paid advertising, etc., as a single telephone number that citizens can call to ask questions or make comments about aviation issues. If the public which the agency wishes to reach is large geographically, the hotline is usually established so that the call is toll-free to the public regardless of where the call is placed. The hotline is manned with staff who will take responsibility for finding answers to questions from the public, or for relaying comments or complaints from the public to appropriate staff persons. Hotlines have been used as a method of handling noise complaints, and as coordination points for individuals requiring information about the progress of a study. Comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as a part of the record of a public meeting or hearing.

The communication skills of the staff operating the hotline are very important, as defensive or insensitive responses to public comment may produce negative effects.

#### Advantages of the Hotline:

- . The hotline provides a convenient means by which citizens can participate in the study.
- . The hotline assists citizens in locating the staff most likely to be able to answer their questions or receive their comments.



- . The hotline may be a useful means of providing information about meetings or other community involvement activities.
- . A hotline is a communication to the public of the sponsoring agency's interest in their comments or questions.

#### Disadvantages of the Hotline:

- . Defensive or insensitive comments may produce negative reactions.
- . The hotline must be staffed by people able and willing to deal with public comment effectively.

#### DISPLAYS/EXHIBITS:

Description of the Technique: One technique which has been used to inform the broad public of community involvement programs, or to obtain comment from the public, is to set up displays or exhibits in places such as the airport lobby, shopping centers, or state fairs where there are a number of individuals passing by. These range from fixed displays which provide general information to the public, to booths which are manned by community involvement specialists who are able to answer questions from the public, or solicit public comment. Even when fixed displays are used, it is possible to have response forms available so that the public can respond to the display. Displays and exhibits may be particularly useful in identifying publics that had not been previously identified as interested in aviation issues. They also provide general information to the public about aviation problems, even if people choose not to participate. Exhibits or displays should be coordinated with other community involvement activities, so that people displaying an interest as a result of an exhibit can be directed into other community involvement activities.

#### Advantages of Exhibits or Displays:

- . Provide information to the general public about aviation issues.
- . Help identify individuals and groups with an interest in aviation issues.

#### Disadvantages of Displays or Exhibits:

- . If exhibits or booths are staffed, they involve a major commitment of staff time.
- . Must be coordinated with other public involvement techniques so that interest developed through the exhibit can be directed into other community involvement activities.





## NEWSPAPER INSERTS:

Description of the Technique: One technique which has been used to provide information to the broad general public and, at the same time solicit comment back from the public, is a newspaper insert including a response form distributed through the local newspaper. Most newspapers are able to handle the distribution of inserts for a modest cost, and are often able to print the insert at considerably less cost than other commercial printers. The newspaper insert can describe the study and the various means by which the public can be involved, and also include a response form which will allow people to express opinions or indicate their willingness to be involved in other community involvement techniques.

Most urban newspapers are able to distribute inserts to selected geographical areas, rather than their entire readership, so that it is possible to target the insert at those areas which will have the highest interest in the study. On a percentage basis, the return of response forms is not likely to be very high, although on a total quantity basis, it may provide a means of participation for the largest number of citizens compared with other community involvement techniques. Because respondents are self-selecting, a statistical bias is introduced into the responses, so that they cannot be represented as statistically valid like a survey.

### Advantages of a Newspaper Insert:

- . Newspaper inserts reach a much greater percentage of the population than most other public information techniques.
- . Newspaper inserts provide an opportunity for a large number of citizens to participate.
- . Newspaper insert response forms provide a means for identifying other individuals and groups interested in participating in the community involvement activities.

### Disadvantages of Newspaper Inserts:

- . Newspaper inserts are relatively expensive to produce and distribute in large numbers.
- . The response rate from newspaper inserts is relatively low, and it cannot be represented as statistically valid.



## REPORTS, BROCHURES, INFORMATION BULLETINS:

Description of the Technique: Reports, brochures, and information bulletins are an essential part of every community involvement effort. They are an essential vehicle for informing the public of the opportunities for participation, the progress of the study to date, and any decisions that have been made.

There are three times at which reports are typically published in a community involvement program. These include:

- a. After problem definition, including initial data collection.
- b. Upon identification of a set of broad general alternatives.
- c. Upon identification of specific detailed alternatives and their environmental impacts.

Because reports contain technical information, one key requirement is to write reports in a manner which provides needed technical information, yet is understandable to the general public. It is sometimes useful to have reports reviewed by an advisory committee who can point out confusing, biased, or unnecessary material in the report.

Brochures are usually brief (up to sixteen pages) and contain a description of the study, the issues involved in the study, and a summary of the opportunities for the public to participate in the study. Typically brochures are used to reach new publics or inform known publics of the initiation of the study. The usefulness of a brochure is almost entirely dependent on its visual attractiveness and the skill with which it is written.

Information bulletins or newsletters are periodic reports to the public published as a means of maintaining a continuing interest in the study as well as documenting the progress in the study in a highly visible manner for the public. Information bulletins or newsletters are particularly important during portions of the study which are relatively technical in nature. During these periods the general public is less likely to be involved but should be kept informed of what is occurring through these media. The value of an information bulletin or newsletter rests almost entirely upon its ability to stir interest and encourage interaction. A drab, boring, bureaucratic sounding newsletter will usually not be worth the effort.

Some suggestions for all publications are shown below:

- a. Strive for simplicity.
- b. Use the public's language.



- c. Make the message relevant to the reader.
- d. Use graphics and avoid overly bureaucratic layouts.
- e. Don't make commitments that cannot be fulfilled.
- f. Provide clear instructions for how the public can interact with you.
- g. Get help from the public in preparing and reviewing the materials.

#### Advantages of Publications:

- . Publications are direct means of providing a substantial amount of information to a large number of people in a relatively economic manner.
- . Publications are able to communicate a greater amount of information than almost any other form of communication.
- . Publications serve as a permanent record of what has transpired in the community involvement program.

#### Disadvantages of Publications:

- . Preparation of attractive publications requires definite skills which are not available in all organizations, so may have to be purchased outside the organization.
- . Because of cost factors publications still reach only a limited audience and cannot be considered the only means by which to inform and involve the general public.

#### CONDUCT A SURVEY:

Description of the Technique: Surveys are an effort to determine public attitudes, values, perceptions on various issues employing a rigorous methodology to insure that the findings of the survey in fact represent the sentiment of the community being sampled. Surveys can be conducted by phone, by mail, by individual interviews, or in small group interviews. Firms that design surveys spend many hours and utilize complex procedures to insure that the survey does not contain bias and that the "sample" of people interviewed is in fact representative. As a result surveys must be designed and conducted by somebody who is experienced in survey design. Normally this means that someone outside the planning organization must be retained to design and conduct the survey.

The steps you would need to follow in conducting a survey are:

1. Determine specifically what it is your agency or organization wants to find out.





2. Determine how the information would be used once it is obtained, so that you know the results are related to your planning or decision-making process.
3. Check to be sure whether other organizations already collect the information that would answer your questions.
4. Unless you have an experienced survey person in your own organization, contact a reputable survey research firm.

Federal regulations require OMB approval of all surveys or formal questionnaires conducted by federal agencies or with federal funds. These approvals are very difficult and time-consuming to obtain, virtually ruling this technique out for most federal agencies.

#### Advantages of a Survey:

- . Surveys can provide an expression of feeling from the total public, not just those publics which are most directly affected.
- . Surveys can provide an indication of whether or not the active participants in your community involvement program are in fact representative of the broader public.

#### Disadvantages of the Survey:

- . Unless surveys are carefully designed, they do not produce reliable and meaningful data.
- . The cost of developing statistically reliable surveys is high.
- . Surveys cannot substitute for political negotiation between significant interests.
- . If the issue is not of broad public interest, then a substantial number of survey respondents will be uninformed about the issues covered by the survey. (If you need to know that people are poorly informed, then this can itself be important information.)
- . Requirements for OMB approval eliminate this technique for most federal agencies.

#### PARTICIPATORY TELEVISION:

Description of the Technique: Because of the number of people reached by television, it holds considerable potential as a tool for both informing the public, and soliciting participation. Some experts see cable television as holding the answer to participation, since eventually cable television may be utilized in such a way that it allows for two-way communication. In the meantime, there





have been several major uses of television programs. These include:

- a. Preparation of a half-hour or a one-hour television program describing alternative courses of action in a major study. Participants are asked to express their preference by mail or by a ballot that has been distributed in advance of the television program. In some cases discussion groups have been organized so that people watch the television program as a group, and discuss the program as a group, before marking the ballots.
- b. The agency could also obtain a block of time and conduct a call-in show on issues. One planning agency conducted a television program much like a tele-thon, with banks of telephone operators to receive calls from the public and have them answered by a panel of elected officials.
- c. Another agency obtained a regular block of free time from the local channel, and used this as a forum for continuing the discussion in the community involvement program. The television program served as a channel of communication about upcoming events, and also provided a forum for people with different points of view to come on the show and present their viewpoints.

Although television reaches large numbers of people, it is unusual to be able to obtain sufficiently large blocks of time for a participatory television program on commercial television, although this has been accomplished in a few cases where the study was extremely controversial. The audience on educational, university or cable television is much smaller and something of an educational and social economic elite. This creates problems of representation. Any poll which is taken accompanying such a program would share these problems of representation.

#### Advantages of Participatory Television:

- . Participatory television reaches the largest audience of any community involvement technique.
- . This technique is most convenient for the participants, because they do not have to leave their own home.
- . Even if people do not participate by filling out a ballot or phoning in, there is a definite education function to participatory television.

#### Disadvantages of Participatory Television:

- . The audience viewing the program may not be representative, and any votes or tallies taken as a result of the program may also be unrepresentative.



- . Unless some participation occurs in designing the program, the public may not feel that the agency accurately or objectively described the issues.
- . This kind of participation gives equal value to somebody who lives immediately next to the airport as somebody who lives fifty miles away and is only peripherally affected.

#### CUMULATIVE BROCHURE:

Description of the Technique: The cumulative brochure is a document which keeps a visible record of a series of repetitive public meetings, public brochures, workshops, and citizen committee meetings. At the beginning of the process, a brochure is prepared presenting various study alternatives along with the pros and cons for each of the alternatives. In a series of public meetings and workshops, individuals, agencies, and organizations are invited to submit their own alternatives which are then included in the brochure along with their descriptions of pros, cons, and a no-action alternative. The brochure is then republished with space provided in the brochure for individuals to react to the various alternatives by writing their own pros and cons. These comments then become a part of the new brochure. With each round of meetings or other forums for public comment, the brochure grows by the addition of the public comment and technical response. As used by the developer of the cumulative brochure, the process calls for a series of four public meetings, seven versions of the brochure, three workshops and as many citizens committee meetings as may be necessary. The final document is quite thick, but does provide a visible record of the entire process.

#### Advantages of a Cumulative Brochure:

- . The process is very visible and allows the public to see how a decision was reached.
- . The process encourages open communication between the various publics as well as between the public and the sponsoring agency.
- . No special status is granted to any one individual or group over another.

#### Disadvantages of the Cumulative Brochure:

- . The final brochure is a large, cumbersome document and the many editions of the brochure can be expensive to produce.
- . The effectiveness of the brochure depends on the ability of the sponsoring agency to address the issues in non-bureaucratic language.





- . The format of the brochure forces public reaction into a pro or con response when there may be other positions as well.
- . Since the sponsoring agency prepares the brochure, groups which are suspicious of that agency may question whether the brochure is biased.

#### CONDUCT A CONTEST OR EVENT:

Description of the Technique: One way to obtain publicity for your community involvement program is to stage a contest or event as a means of stimulating interest and gaining newspaper or television coverage. Examples of the use of this technique might include:

- . An essay contest in the public schools regarding aviation.
- . A photo contest for the best photo of antique planes.
- . Tours of airport facilities.

The idea is to stage a newsworthy event, related to the theme of the community involvement study. The idea is to not only publicize the community involvement program, but also to get people involved who will then continue to participate in subsequent community involvement efforts. Contests or events might be planned, for example, to precede workshops, meetings, or other community involvement programs in which people could participate.

#### Advantages of a Contest or event:

- . May generate substantial interest and publicity.
- . Will help to identify individuals interested in the kinds of issues addressed by the study.

#### Disadvantages of Contest or Events:

- . Typically does not produce public comment directly applicable to the study.
- . Expectations may be established for continuing participation which if not fulfilled may lead to resentment or cynicism.

#### MEDIATION:

Description of the Technique: Mediation is the application of principles of labor/management mediation to environmental or political issues. In mediation a group is established which represents all the major interests which will be affected by a decision. Members of the mediation panel are all "official" representatives of the interests, and are appointed with the understanding that the organizations they represent will have the opportunity to approve or dis-





approve any agreements which result from the mediation. The basic ground rule which is established is that all agreements will be made by unanimity.

A key element in mediation is the appointment of a third party mediator--someone skilled in mediation, who is not seen as an interested party to the negotiations. The mediator not only structures the deliberations, but often serves as a conduit for negotiations between the various parties.

Mediation is only possible when the various interests in a conflict believe they can accomplish more by negotiation than by continuing to fight.

#### Advantages of Mediation:

- . Mediation can result in an agreement which is supported by all parties to the conflict.
- . Mediation may lead to quick resolution of issues which might otherwise be dragged out through litigation or other political processes.

#### Disadvantages of Mediation:

- . Mediation is an entirely voluntary process, so it will work only when all parties are willing to negotiate.
- . Mediation requires a highly skilled third party mediator.

#### CHARRETTE:

A charrette is similar to mediation in that it attempts to bring together all the critical agencies or individuals in an attempt to achieve mutual agreement on an overall plan. The difference is that a charrette is designed for a very concentrated bloc of time such as an entire weekend or a series of nightly meetings for a week, or a series of once-a-week or weekend meetings. The primary characteristic of a charrette is an effort to reach an agreement in a relatively short time by bringing all the critical decision-makers together under one roof until an agreement is reached. Critical elements in a charrette are:

- a. All major publics must be present so that decisions once reached constitute a consensus.
- b. All participants must agree to participate the entire time of the charette in an effort to resolve differences and arrive at a plan.
- c. Everybody coming to the charrette does so with the understanding that the purpose is to develop an agreement that all participants can live with.



A charrette would be a particularly useful technique in a crisis situation, or as a means of resolving an impasse reached between various groups. It could also be used as a means of shortening the time required to make a decision in a planning study once the basic data collection had been completed.

Normally there is extensive publicity surrounding the charrette so that a larger public is aware of and supportive of the efforts to reach a mutual agreement.

#### Advantages of a Charrette:

- . Useful as a means of achieving consensus and--since all critical interests are involved--can result in a commitment by all significant groups to support any plan coming out of the charrette.
- . The intense nature of the charrette can lead to a deeper understanding of the positions and motivations of other individuals and groups.
- . By working together in an intense manner, previously conflicting interests may develop a feeling of teamwork and cooperation which may extend long beyond this particular study.

#### Disadvantages of a Charrette:

- . Charrettes are effective only when all interested parties are willing to enthusiastically participate, and are willing to accept a negotiated decision.
- . Charrettes are very time-consuming, and it is difficult to get key decision-makers to make the commitment to participate for the length of time required.
- . Charrettes require substantial staff preparation, and can be quite expensive.

#### DELPHI:

Description of the Technique: The Delphi process is a method for obtaining consensus on forecasts by a group of experts. It might be useful, for example, as a means of estimating future airport use by a group of experts with different philosophies and viewpoints. It can also be used as a technique for estimating possible environmental effects of various actions.

The basic procedure is as follows: A questionnaire is submitted individually to each participant requesting them to indicate their forecasts concerning the topic. The responses to the questionnaire



are consolidated and resubmitted to the participants with a request that they make an estimate of the probable occurrence of each event. The participants' responses are again collected and a statistical summary is prepared. The statistical summary is distributed to all participants and the participants are asked to give a new estimate now that they have seen the response of the total group. Participants whose answers differ substantially from the rest of the group are asked to state the reasons behind their answers. The new responses are then summarized statistically and redistributed to the participants who are asked to prepare a final estimate. A final statistical summary is then prepared based on participants' comments.

Delphi can be combined with other community involvement techniques. One agency, for example, carried out the Delphi process by distributing the original questionnaire to several thousand people. Even though only a few responded to the first questionnaire, the results were summarized and redistributed back to the original mailing list. With each redistribution of results, more and more individuals joined in the process. In place of the final summary, a large public meeting was held at which the results of the process were discussed. In this case the Delphi process served to generate considerable public interest, and the agency felt that the final public meeting was much better attended than it would have been without the Delphi process.

#### Advantages of a Delphi Process:

- The Delphi process is an effective tool for achieving a consensus on forecasts among groups of experts.
- Delphi minimizes the disadvantages of group dynamics such as over-dominance by a single personality or positions taken to obtain status or acceptance from the group.

#### Disadvantages of a Delphi Process:

- Delphi may have a tendency to homogenize points of view.
- The process of mailing questionnaires and redistributing summaries can be a time-consuming and cumbersome process.
- The public may be no more willing to accept the findings of an expert panel than it would of a single technical expert.
- The experts still may not be right.





## SIMULATION GAMES:

There have been a number of simulation games which have been designed to allow people to simulate the effects of making particular policy choices and decisions, and in that process learn more about the impact of decisions and the interrelatedness of various features of an environmental or economic system. Simulation gaming provides an opportunity for people to try out their positions, and see what the consequences would be and how other groups react to them. Simulation games vary greatly in their complexity and the length of time required to play them. Unfortunately, the closer the game resembles "reality", the more lengthy and complex it usually becomes.

While simulation games can serve as an effective educational device--as a method for informing the public of the consequences of various choices--they typically do not provide opportunities for the public to provide comment specifically on study issues. As a result, simulation games could be used to educate an advisory group or leadership group of some sort, but must be used in conjunction with other community involvement techniques.

### Advantages of a Simulation Game:

- . Simulation games can provide the public with information about the consequences of various policy positions or decisions.
- . Simulation games can provide the public with an understanding of the dynamics of an economic or environmental system.
- . Participation in a simulation game is usually fun, and participants develop a rapport and communication which can be maintained throughout the entire study.

### Disadvantages of a Simulation Game:

- . There are a number of simulation games on the market which are confusing, over-technical or misleading. You will have to exercise great care in selecting a simulation game appropriate for your particular study.
- . While simulation games can be educational, they typically don't provide opportunities for direct public comment on your study.
- . Since few games have a perfect fit with reality, citizens may apply the game rules inappropriately to the actual situation.
- . People may become so engrossed in the game that they forget about the actual issues at hand.





## PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CITIZENS:

Description of the Technique: The public often feels intimidated by professional staff, and feel that agencies are able to present their points of view in well-argued technical studies, while the public does not have these resources available. Several agencies have provided technical assistance to citizens by providing staff or consultants to help various interests or individuals in developing their own alternatives, or helping them analyze issues or evaluate the impacts of various alternatives. Whether or not this assistance can be provided by internal staff, or must be "independent" consultants, depends on the relationship that exists between the planning agency and the community. The purpose in providing this technical assistance is to insure that citizens who have different values and orientations than the agency's are able to develop their ideas using the same kind of technical expertise as that possessed by the agency itself. In highly controversial situations, the "facts" generated by independent technical assistance may be accepted more readily than "facts" generated by the agency's professional staff.

If the sponsoring agency is already committed to a particular alternative, then the agency's staff assigned to provide technical assistance will find themselves in the awkward position of having to "serve two masters."

### Advantages of Technical Assistance:

- . Technical assistance can reduce the likelihood that citizens will feel intimidated by the expertise of professional staff.
- . Ideas from the public can be developed to the same level of expertise as ideas generated by the agency.
- . Information generated by "independent" sources may be more acceptable to the public than those generated by the agency's staff in controversial situations.

### Disadvantages of Technical Assistance

- . If the agency is not open to all alternatives, then agency staff may be placed in the position of divided loyalties. It is difficult to provide technical assistance to all groups, instead of simply the most active.
- . The public can still fear that technical assistance will be used to mislead them or manipulate them to accept the agency's viewpoint.



## TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CITIZENS:

Description of the Technique: Training programs are usually conducted to improve citizens' understanding of how studies are conducted, to inform them of technical information necessary to understand the study, or to improve communication between citizens and staff. Those training programs for citizens which have been used in community involvement have typically been in these three areas:

- a. Training about the planning and decision-making process.
- b. Training on substantive content such as planning, environment impact assessment, etc.
- c. Skills of working together as a team or skills of meeting leadership.

This training might be accomplished formally through seminars, workshops and lectures, or it may be conducted more informally through simulation games, informal round-table discussions, brown-bag lunches, or through publications or audio visual material.

The intent of providing training to citizens is to insure they have sufficient background to participate effectively in the community involvement program, and also to provide citizens a more equal footing with professionals, so they can work with professionals without intimidation by the professionals' expertise. Training in group dynamics or meeting leadership can be effective when there are problems in working together effectively; or when citizens will be assisting in conducting meetings or workshops.

### Advantages of a Citizen Training Program:

- . Training may increase the effectiveness or impact the public has upon the study.
- . When fully informed citizens may feel less intimidated by professionals and will be more likely to express differing viewpoints.
- . When properly trained, citizens can make a valuable contribution to conducting the community involvement program.

### Disadvantages of a Citizen Training Program:

- . Some citizens may resent the suggestion that they need training or may question the "objectivity" of a training program conducted by a planning agency.
- . Training is usually limited to a small group and therefore there are problems of who is included and who is excluded.



- Conducting an effective training program requires special training skills, and therefore may require the additional cost of an outside consultant.
- The training must be integral to the planning or decision-making process or citizens will view the training as wasted time and effort.





## DESIGNING A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

There is no single approach to community involvement that will be the best for all situations. The kind of community involvement program you need depends on the level of interest in the study you're conducting, the geographical area in which you are working, e.g. size, urbanization, etc., and the historic relationship between the airport and the surrounding community. It can be equally inappropriate to design a major community involvement effort for a minor study as to have minimal community involvement for a major conflict. This chapter will provide a "thought process" which will lead you through certain basic steps that can help you design a community involvement program appropriate to your situation.

The first principle in designing effective community involvement is that there must be an integration between the community involvement activities and the decision-making process. Community involvement activities must be carefully scheduled with other elements of the decision-making process, such as technical studies, to insure that the timing of information both to and from the public will result in the needed expression of public comment at those points in the decision-making process where it can exert the greatest influence. Put another way: the community involvement should be designed so that progression through the various stages of the the planning or decision-making process cannot take place without certain well-defined interactions with the public.

### A "THOUGHT PROCESS"

A series of steps, or a "thought process," has been described below which can assist in insuring this integration, and assist in establishing a context for selecting community involvement techniques appropriate to the unique requirements of your situation.

1. Clearly identify the steps in the decision-making process.  
The first step is to be sure that you have a clear understanding of what the natural stages or steps are in your own planning or decision-making process. The purpose in defining specific steps is to insure that signposts have been established which enable development of a time schedule of the points at which information must be communicated to the public, and received from the public. Depending on the kind of study you are conducting, these stages may be well defined. If they are not, the basic stages shown below may assist you in structuring your program.
  - a. Issue Identification/Sensing Public Interest: The purpose of community involvement during this stage is to obtain a clear definition of public needs and concerns. It is also a "sensing" stage during which

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an appraisal is made of the intensity of public interest, the kinds of publics most likely to participate, the kinds of issues which are most likely to generate additional public interest.

- b. Formulation of Alternatives: The formulation of detailed alternatives is normally a consultative process primarily accomplished with other agencies, organized groups, and community leaders. Individuals may be the source of ideas for alternatives, but frequently these ideas may require additional technical work on the part of the sponsoring agency to be developed into full alternatives. Ideas from the public often do not come in the form of technically accurate, detailed alternatives, so fragments and incomplete ideas must be translated into genuine alternatives by technical personnel.
  - c. Evaluation of alternatives: This will normally be the stage at which the greatest participation will occur. Ample opportunities for the public to participate prior to any decision or selection of a preferred alternative should be provided.
  - d. Decision-making: The decision-making stage may require continued negotiation between those publics and agencies most critically affected by the decision. Once a decision has been made, the agency also has an obligation to inform the public what the decision is, why the alternatives were rejected, and the reasons for the final decision. It is important that the public receive this information promptly after the decision is made, rather than many months later when all technical reports have been completed.
2. Identify the desired outcome of each step in the decision-making process. Once you have defined the steps in your decision-making process you now need to define exactly what you want to accomplish--what your "products" or "outputs" are--at each step in the process. Using the four-step process described above, here are some examples of things you might want to accomplish at each step:

#### ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

- . A definition of the public's perception of the environmental impacts of the airport on neighboring communities.
- . A baseline of present conditions.
- . A projection of future airport demand.
- . A description of the future conditions which will occur if no action is taken.





## FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

- . A list of all alternatives the public would like evaluated.
- . A set of criteria to be used in evaluating alternatives.

## EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

- . An understanding of which alternatives are acceptable to the public.
- . An appraisal of the technical feasibility of each alternative.
- . An understanding of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of each alternative.

## DECISION-MAKING

- . An appraisal of the institutional restraints on implementation of alternatives.
- . An understanding of the "trade-offs" that different publics and agencies are willing to make.

Keep in mind that these are just examples. You will need to develop your own list of "Desired Outcomes" for the key steps in your decision-making process.

3. Identify the Information Exchange which must take place to accomplish this outcome. The Information Exchange consists of the information that must be communicated to the public in order for the public to participate effectively, e.g., environmental conditions, resource capabilities, etc., and the information which must be received from the public if the desired outcome is to be accomplished, e.g., preferences about alternatives, anticipated implementation problems, etc.

The starting place in identifying the Information Exchange is to begin with an analysis like this: "If the planning task I must accomplish is 'problem identification', what information must I obtain from the publics to complete that problem identification?" Since you may have several objectives or "outcomes" for each planning stage, you will need to do this same kind of analysis for each objective. In this way you will identify the information which must be acquired from the publics in order to complete each planning task.

But the publics may not be able to respond unless they are first provided with information. If, for example, you were selecting a site for a radar installation, and only a limited number of locations were feasible due to operational requirements-- then the public must be informed of these limitations before they can be expected to contribute to the final selection of



the most desirable (or least impacting) site. So the analysis that takes place is: "I want information from the public to help me define possible alternatives (or define the study area, or measure impacts). What information does the public first need from me before they can respond?" Again, this is done for each objective at each planning stage. This analysis results in a statement of what information must be provided to the public to complete each planning task.

To illustrate: If one of your Desired Outcomes is "a description of the future conditions which will occur if no action is taken" then some of the information you may want to get to and from the public might be:

TO THE PUBLIC:

- . Current airport use
- . Projected airport use
- . Implications of this use in traffic, noise, air pollution, etc.

FROM THE PUBLICS

- . Probable future land uses near the airport.
- . Level of "tolerability" of each of the impacts, etc.

If your Desired Outcome were "an understanding of the 'trade-offs' that different publics and agencies are willing to make," then the information exchange might be:

TO THE PUBLIC

- . The range of technically feasible alternatives
- . The impacts of each alternative

FROM THE PUBLIC

- . The relative importance of the impacts.
- . Which impacts are considered important by which publics.
- . Modifications of alternatives which would make them more acceptable. etc.

Again, you will need to make this kind of analysis for each of "Desired Outcomes" you identified. You may find that there is some overlap between them. But the critical point is that for you to design an effective community involvement program you must clearly define what it is you want from the public, and what information you must provide the public so it can participate effectively.





4. Identify the publics with whom the information must be exchanged. Once you know the information exchange which must take place you need to decide who the public is with whom this information is to be exchanged. You'll find that you are not dealing with the same public for each issue. If you need to know the impact of the airport upon local communities, the public from which you will be able to get this information will be the residents and leaders of the neighboring communities. If you need information about preferences of people who use the airport, then you need information from a regional public. It's probably already clear that the reason for defining which public you're dealing with is that the community involvement techniques you use will be substantially different if you need information only from neighboring communities, or you need them from a regional public.

The same holds true in communicating information to the public. There is some broad general information--such as the opportunity to participate in your community involvement program--which you will want to communicate to the broadest public possible. But some highly technical information may be of interest only to technical people in other agencies or organized interest groups.

The same public will also not be involved or interested in each step of the decision-making process. During relatively technical stages the public may consist primarily of governmental staff, leaders of interest groups, etc. When the information to be obtained from the public is an expression of values or preferences, then a much larger general public will have an interest and should be consulted. For this reason it is often useful to use the term "publics" rather than "the public." By targeting the publics most likely to be involved at each step, it is possible to identify the size and characteristics of this public and establish a context for the kinds of community involvement activities which should be utilized.

The kinds of questions you may want to consider are:

- a. Which publics are capable of providing you with the information you need at this planning stage?

For example, would the information come from people living in the impacted area, from recreationists in the area, from a regional public, or all of them.

- b. Which publics will be able to understand the information you will be providing at this planning stage (and are there different levels of information that need to be provided)?



Is the information you have to communicate so technical, for example, that it can be understood only by other agency personnel, then you either have to find some way of communicating it to a broader public, or your participation will be limited to those who understand it.

- c. How much time and continuity will be required for publics to participate effectively?

The more time and continuity required, the smaller the number of people who can, or will, participate. So if a particular issue requires continuity, you will be restricted to a smaller number of participants.

- d. Whose participation is required for "visibility" or "political acceptability?"

For example, are there some groups whose participation must be solicited, such as a neighborhood group, if your program is going to be believable?

Additional information on targeting the publics for a community involvement program is provided in Chapter 5.

5. Identify the techniques--and the sequence of use of these techniques--to accomplish the required exchange of information with the appropriate publics. The four steps above provide a framework within which community involvement techniques can be selected. At this point in the "thought process," it should be possible to know:

- a. What information must be communicated to the public.
- b. Which publics must receive this information.
- c. What information must be received from the public.
- d. From which publics this information can be obtained.

This information will provide you with a broad general context in which to evaluate specific community involvement techniques, and develop a detailed plan or sequence of activities. Although this provides a general framework, you will also have to consider factors which are unique to your situation such as:

- a. The level of acceptance or comfort with community involvement by the decision-makers.
- b. The historical relationship between the airport and the neighborhood communities.





- c. Existing mechanisms--such as neighborhood councils--which already exist for community involvement.
- d. Level of interest in this particular study.
- e. Cultural differences among the various participants.
- f. Demographics, e.g., size of the study area, population affected, life-style of the possible participants, etc.

Chapters 6-9 are designed to provide you with more detailed information about community involvement techniques and the circumstances under which different techniques are appropriate.

6. Identify ways to coordinate your community involvement activities for maximum effect. Once you have settled on certain basic techniques--such as those outlined in Chapters 6-9--you next need to ensure that the timing and sequence of these techniques are coordinated for maximum effect. This is easiest to illustrate with an example. Suppose you decide to hold a series of workshops in neighborhood communities. You may have decided to do this because: 1) The information you need is available only from local communities, 2) You want to use a meeting format where people have a sense of really having produced something, not just expressed themselves, and 3) Workshops are small enough so you can begin to get to know people in the community personally. All this makes sense.

But now you want to ensure that your workshops produce the most effect. So you'll want to consider using a whole range of other techniques to enhance your workshop. Examples might be:

- . A press release or spot announcement about the workshops.
- . A visit to local newspapers to arrange for feature stories about the workshops.
- . Presentations (such as a slide show) for civic clubs and interest groups to stir interest in the workshops.
- . Paid advertising in newspapers, radio and TV.
- . A contest or event to attract interest in your community involvement program.
- . Publicity arranged through the interest groups themselves.
- . Working with an advisory group to develop the workshop format and review publications.
- . Preparation of handouts for workshop participants.





- . Personal invitations to community leaders to attend the workshops.
- . A response form for distribution during the workshop.
- . Preparation of a slide show or video show to explain important concepts to workshop participants.
- . Press releases or feature stories discussing the results of the workshops.

The list could go on. The point is that by employing some of the techniques above--as appropriate to your situation--you can increase the attendance, interest, and effectiveness of your workshops. Each technique is effective because it is linked with the others in a coordinated and integrated manner.

A form summarizing this "thought process" is provided on the next page. You may want to use this form in designing your next community involvement program.



## WHO IS THE PUBLIC?

When we talk about community involvement, we are really defining "the community," or "the public" as any individual, interest group, organization, or governmental agency other than the sponsor of the community involvement effort. Yet obviously if you are designing a community involvement program for a regional airport, you can't reasonably expect several million people to participate. During the development of the Sea-Tac Communities Plan (described in Chapter 1) which was an ambitious community involvement effort, approximately 3,000 people participated by attending meetings, completing a questionnaire, or participating in a task force. Many thousands more received newsletters or watched a television show, which described the program, but participated in no other way. But of the 3,000 who did participate actively, at the most several hundred participated in any continuous way. Yet at the end of the process, the agencies involved, and the community at large generally accepted that a consensus had been reached. Clearly the concept of "the public" needs some elaboration.

### THE CONCEPT OF PUBLICS

The first principle in defining "the public" is to realize that "the public" doesn't exist except as an aggregate of many, many publics. "The public" doesn't exist any more than the "average family" with 2.1 children. Though both are concepts are useful, they don't reflect reality (there aren't many families with 2.1 children). In fact, most of us belong to a wide variety of publics, rather than a single public. Some of the characteristics which may define us as members of particular publics could include: Sex, race, type of employment, religious affiliation, political preference, the community in which we live, avocation/recreation interests, educational background, membership in professional or labor groups, support of a particular athletic team, etc., etc. In other words, we all have a number of affiliations of varying degrees of importance. The degree to which we identify ourselves as a member of that public changes with circumstances, and the emotional significance of that affiliation to us. The fact that someone lives in a particular neighborhood may have relatively low significance, for example, until it is discovered the neighborhood might be impacted by noise if a new runway is built. Some publics may be relatively well-organized, such as a political party, a professional association, or a social group. Others are relatively unorganized and become noticeable only when they are strongly affected by a particular issue. As a result it is far more feasible to talk in terms of publics rather than "the public" to remind ourselves that we are in fact dealing with many interests and groups rather than a single monolithic body.

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## THE CONCEPT OF "THE VOCAL MINORITY/THE SILENT MAJORITY"

It is a common complaint that too many decisions are made by "the vocal minority", since it is an observable phenomenon that most political decisions are made by a minority of actively involved and interested citizens. In recent years it has been argued that it is "the silent majority" which is not being listened to. Usually the concept of "the silent majority" is used as a justification for going against the demands of the active minority. Thus a politician, an agency, or an interest group may claim, "If we could just hear from the 'silent majority' .....then it would be clear that our policies have the support of the people." This is a rather circular argument, of course, because as long as people remain silent no one can contradict the claim, and anybody who speaks up is no longer a member of "the silent majority." In fact, "the silent majority" is another mythical beast which does not exist and rests on the assumption that somehow, because people are silent, they are totally in agreement. In reality, it is far safer to assume that the silent majority contains just as many diverse opinions as does the active minority, but that the silent majority has chosen not to participate, either because they do not see the issue as having much impact on them, or they do not believe that they can affect the outcome.

It should also be remembered that the "silent majority" is not a fixed class of people. All of us make choices about when to participate, so we may chose to be part of the vocal minority on one issue, be a member of the silent majority on several others, etc. In other words, the membership of the vocal minority and the silent majority are constantly changing. When we say that we have a "controversial" issue, all we are saying is that the vocal minority is relatively large for this particular issue.

There has been considerable research on the reasons that people choose not to participate, and the three reasons most often cited in the research are:

1. They feel adequately represented in the active minority - Leaders of visible interest groups often serve as "surrogates" for a much larger group of people who feel represented by the activities of that interest group. Most of us belong to some group in which we do little more than send our annual dues in order that that group will represent our particular interests. A case in point might be a professional group. Residents of a neighborhood near an airport may not participate because they feel represented by a neighborhood group. Because of this "surrogate" role, special interest groups are an integral and necessary part of an effective operating democracy.
2. People are unaware that they have a stake in a particular decision - We all choose to involve ourselves on those issues which we see as having a major impact on our personal lives. We also make choices between those issues which we see as having relatively major impacts, vs. those whose impacts are





relatively minor. We may be so busy earning a living, for example, that a state aviation master plan may seem very abstract and unrelated to our lives. In effect, every citizen also has the right to choose not to participate.

3. People don't believe they can affect the decision - If people don't believe their participation will make a difference, they won't participate. One of the major responsibilities in a community involvement program is to make clear how people can influence a decision, and show clear connections between the public's participation and the outcome.

In summary, it is probably inevitable that community involvement programs will be dealing primarily with a relatively small number of highly motivated and affected citizens and groups. Naturally it is important to maintain public information efforts so that a much broader public is aware that the study is taking place, and aware of their opportunity to participate. Because community involvement programs do inevitably deal primarily with the minority, there are certain obligations that every community involvement program has to the broader majority. These include:

1. To inform as broad a segment of the public as possible of the stake they may have in the issue under study, e.g., informing air travelers of the possible impacts of curfew hours.
2. To clearly inform the public how they can participate in the study, and how their participation will influence the outcome, e.g., news stories describing upcoming activities.
3. To systematically target publics in the community involvement program to insure that the active minority is representative--in terms of values and interests--of the broader majority, i.e., are all points of view involved in your program.

#### TARGETING THE PUBLIC

One implication of the observations above is that "the public" varies from issue to issue, study to study. The number of people who will see themselves as sufficiently affected by a particular decision will vary from decision to decision. A neighborhood group which is very interested in noise issues, may be very disinterested with your "Unified Work Program." As indicated in the "thought process" outlined in the last chapter, one of the steps in designing an effective community involvement program is to systematically identify the publics who are most likely to see themselves as affected at each step of the planning or decision-making process. One of the difficulties is that the degree to which people feel affected by a particular decision is a result of their subjective perception: One individual may feel severely impacted by noise, at the same time that his neighbor does not. However, the starting point always remains some effort to objectively analyze the likelihood





that someone will feel affected by the study or decision. Some of the bases on which people are most likely to feel affected are:

1. Proximity: People who live in the immediate area of an airport and are likely to be affected by noise, vibrations, fuel odors, traffic congestion, property value impacts, or possibly even threat of dislocation, are the most obvious publics to be included in the study. The more directly people experience these impacts, the less likely they are willing to be represented by a group--such as a neighborhood association--and the more likely they are to want to participate personally.
2. Economic: Groups that have economic advantages or jobs at stake, e.g., airlines, airline pilots, people employed at the airport, are again an obvious starting point in any analysis of possible publics.
3. Use: Those people who use an airport are also potential publics who may wish to participate in the community involvement program. One difficulty in community involvement programs--for which there is no easy solution--is determining who represents the airport user.
4. Social: Airports often have a direct effect in changing the character of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the airport. People who see airports as a threat to the social and environmental conditions of the local neighborhoods may be interested in planning efforts surrounding the airport.
5. Values: Some groups may be only indirectly affected by the first four criteria, but believe that the issues raised in a study directly affect their values, their "sense of the way things ought to be." Any time a study touches on such issues as free enterprise vs. government control, or jobs vs. environmental enhancement, there will be a number of individuals who will participate primarily because of these values issues. Others will participate whenever tax dollars are at stake.

While these categories above may already begin to suggest publics that you would want to include in a community involvement program, there are a number of other specific resources you may want to tap in targeting the public. These include:

1. Self-Identification: Stories about the study in the newspaper, radio, or TV, the distribution of brochures and newsletters, and well-publicized public meetings are all means of encouraging self-identification. Anyone who participates by attending the meeting or writing a letter or phoning for information has clearly indicated an interest in being an active public in the study. Brochures and reports should also contain some sort of response form so that people can indicate an interest in participating.



2. Third-Party Identification: One of the best ways to obtain information about other interests or individuals who should be included in the study is to ask representatives of known interests who else should be involved. You might, for example, conduct interviews with neighborhood group representatives, inquiring who else they believe should be consulted. Also, all response forms with reports, brochures, or newsletters should request suggestions for other groups or individuals who might be interested in the study.
3. Staff Identification: If you are on the staff of an airport proprietor, you will undoubtedly find that many other staff representatives are aware of individuals or groups who have concerns about airport issues. This may be due to participation in past studies, complaints received on noise or other environmental issues, or personal contacts in the local communities. As a result, one of the richest sources of information about possible individuals and groups who may be interested in participating will be your own internal staff.
4. Lists of Groups or Individuals: There are numerous lists available which could assist in targeting the publics. These lists include:
  - . Yellow pages
  - . Chamber of Commerce lists
  - . Lists of associations or neighborhood groups
  - . City and county directories
  - . Direct mailing lists of groups of various types (these must be purchased)
  - . Lists maintained by Sociology/Political Science Departments
5. Historical records: There may be considerable information in your own old files. This includes:
  - . Noise complaints
  - . Lists of previous participants in earlier studies
  - . Correspondence files
  - . Library files on past projects
6. Newspaper Library: A review of newspaper clippings may reveal names of individuals or groups who have participated in aviation-related studies previously, or who have expressed opinions about the area of your concern, such as airport operations.





7. Consultation with other agencies: Staff of a number of agencies may have information about publics interested in aviation issues. These might include: FAA, airport proprietor, airlines, city and county planning and zoning authorities, State Aviation Office, etc. In addition, many other agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of Transportation, etc. are currently conducting community involvement or citizen participation efforts, and as a result may be in touch with influential community leaders who should also be included in your studies.
8. User Survey: One possible community involvement technique is to conduct a survey of users of your facility. If this survey is conducted near the beginning of a community involvement program, it can also be used to identify individuals or groups who would like to participate in the study.

[NOTE: There are major limitations on surveys conducted by federal agencies. See Chapter 9.]

#### IDENTIFYING PUBLICS AT EACH STAGE OF PLANNING

As indicated in the previous chapter, the same publics are not necessarily involved in each stage of planning. Some stages of planning require public review from the broadest range of publics possible. Other stages require a degree of continuity in understanding of the technical data base which tends to limit participation to a "leadership" group. This "leadership" could consist of individuals who are knowledgeable in the field, have defined leadership roles in environmental, business or civic groups. Some people are seen as leaders because they advocates for a particular position, while others are seen as leaders precisely because they are viewed as "objective" or "reasonable."

There should be no attempt to exclude broader publics during those planning stages which require continuity and an understanding of the technical data, but the community involvement techniques used during those stages are likely to be aimed at smaller numbers of people. For example, when continuity is needed an advisory group may be a particularly useful technique. When there is a need for broad public evaluation of alternatives, then public meetings, newsletters, workshops, etc. may be more useful techniques.

In thinking through which publics need to be involved at specific stages of the planning process it may be useful to identify the different levels of "publics," such as:

1. Staff of other federal, state, and local governmental agencies.
2. Elected officials at levels of government.
3. Highly visible leaders of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., air transport association, airline pilots' associations, neighborhood groups, etc.





4. Membership of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., residents in proximity of the airport, airport users, etc.
5. "General" public not identified with organized groups.

At different stages of the planning process all five groups may need to be involved, at other stages only a few of these levels will be targeted. To avoid the dangers of producing an "elitist" community involvement program, any planning stage during which you have worked primarily with the "leadership" publics should be followed by a more general review by broader publics. Even though you may want to work with "leadership" publics because of their technical background, for both visibility and political acceptability it is necessary that you also work with a much broader public.

By "targeting" the various publics at each stage of decision-making, you are then in a position to select appropriate community involvement techniques to reach these particular publics.

A major reference in identifying the publics is: Willeke, Gene E., Identification of Publics in Water Resources Planning, OWRR Project B-095-GA, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332, Sept. 1974.





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